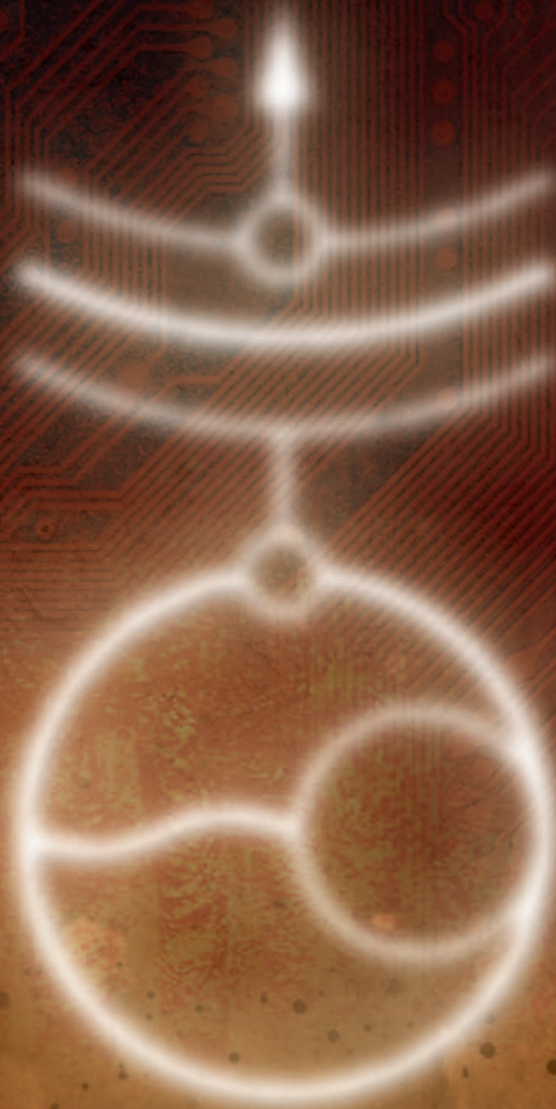


SHADOW FALLING

A SCIENCE-FICTION ADVENTURE FOR 4TH-6TH LEVEL CHARACTERS



SHADOW FALLING



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THE MISTRESS OF VISION

*All things by immortal power,
Near and Far
Hiddenly
To each other linked are,
That thou canst not stir a flower
Without troubling of a star.*

Francis Thompson

ADVENTURE

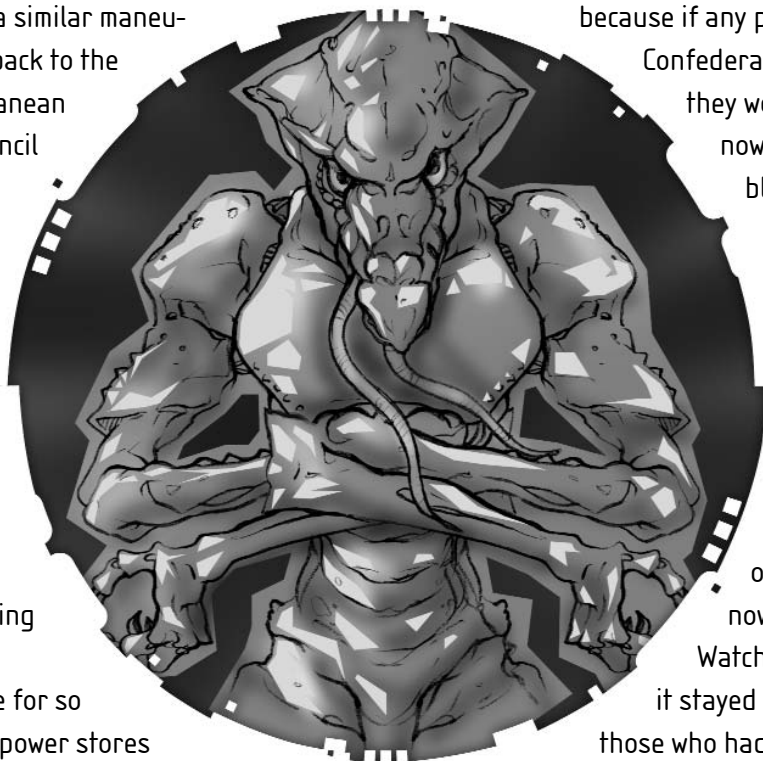
SOME THINGS ARE NOT MEANT TO BE FOUND

They were testing again; attempting to run the gauntlet of security measures that surrounded the containment room in the hope that they had run out of energy or ammunition. The vaasi were again disappointed, as they had been the thousands of times they tried a similar maneuver, and retreated back to the dark, dank subterranean hallways of the Council Ruin. Once it was sure the vaasi had given up completely, Watchman 3 shut down most of the security systems, leaving active only the sensors that would detect another attack. After guarding the most powerful weapon in existence for so long, even the vast power stores of the Star Confederation were beginning to run dry.

Artificial intelligence entities like Watchman 3 could not truly become bored, but it had been here long enough that the recent, more frequent

attempts by the vaasi to penetrate its security perimeter were almost a welcome distraction. It had been long enough that Watchman 3 expected no one to relieve it of its charge,

because if any part of the Star Confederation had survived they would have come by now. While the small black box under its care did not look very important, it was merely a shell containing the most powerful destructive force in the universe. Once it had wiped out entire stars, but now it was the job of Watchman 3 to make sure it stayed out of the hands of those who had created it, the vaasi, even if they were now little more than savages. No security system can stand forever, and Watchman 3 was growing worried. If something did not happen soon, its assignment would be a failure.



SHADOW FALLING is an adventure for 4-6 characters of 4th-6th level, and requires the d20 Modern Roleplaying game published by Wizards of the Coast, Inc.. The module is set in the DAWNING STAR campaign setting, but it may be easily modified to fit in other settings. A variety of skills and abilities will help the characters in the adventure, including combat skills, survival skills, vehicle skills, and the ability to deal with alien

technology, but special equipment, classes, feats, or skills are not required for the adventure. The adventure takes place entirely on the planet of Eos, specifically in Dawning Star City and the region around the Council Ruin. The adventure may be easily scaled up to suit more powerful characters, but making the adventure easier is more difficult due to the large number of enemies involved in many of the combats.

HISTORY REVIEW • • •

Back in the days of the Star Confederation, the Council Ruin served as the central governmental building of the Star Confederation, housing much of its bureaucracy and computer storage facilities. The Council Ruin, originally called the Council Dome, served as the meeting place for the Star Confederation Council, the governing body of the Star Confederation, and most of the personnel that supported it. In addition it contained military command centers, libraries, courts, and other facilities required to keep a government functioning. The core of the Council Ruin is a massive circular dome ten miles across, within which are contained thousands of rooms and chambers that once held the government of the Star Confederation. Smaller buildings once surrounded it, but these are little more than piles of rubble now.

After many years of peace the Star Confederation came into conflict with the Vaasi Empire over the use of a device called the star harvester. The vaasi used the massive device to pull the hearts out of stars via a wormhole and contain the star heart within a powerful force field.

They then utilized the star heart as an energy source, and their entire civilization's infrastructure and technology was built on the foundation of using star hearts for power. The process of extracting a star heart destroyed the star; the vaasi had already wiped out a number of civilizations with the star harvester before the Star Confederation stole it in a move to stop their destructive rampage.

Although the Star Confederation offered to help the Vaasi Empire find alternate energy sources and had no interest in using the star harvester themselves, this act of thievery provoked a war between the two powers that lasted countless years and ended in the mutual destruction of both powers. After stealing the star harvester the Star Confederation dismantled it and hid the pieces on worlds throughout its territory, two pieces being hidden on the Star Confederation capital of Eos: the artificial singularity that allowed for the creation of a stable incoming wormhole and the advanced force field projector that was used to direct the wormhole.

The artificial singularity was hidden under the Council Ruin itself, while the force field projector was hidden in a fortress near the settlement of Greenville. Both objects remained untouched until the events of the adventure *The Edge of Shadow*, which is available for download from the Dawning Star website. In *The Edge of Shadow*, the force field projector is recovered, along with a map leading to the artificial singularity.

When the Star Confederation fell, several million vaasi were on Eos as part of the final invasion force. The infrastructure of the Vaasi Empire collapsed due to lack of power and losses in the war, leaving these soldiers marooned. Their descendants have remained on Eos ever since, their technology slowly failing as they lack the skills or knowledge to repair it. Now they are little more than savages hiding in the caves and ruins of Eos, but some remember why they are here and search for the artificial singularity. They no longer have the means to rebuild the star harvester, but the quest for the artificial singularity has taken on a high religious tone with some vaasi.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW • • •

Shadow Falling opens with the PCs coming into possession of a map that indicates the location of an ancient relic hidden beneath the Council Ruins southwest of Dawning Star City. The means by which this map comes into the hands of the PCs varies according to what factions they have contact with, and a number of options are provided. The Council Ruin is considered off limits to Dawning Star citizens who do not have a permit to be there due to its historical importance and value to the velin, so the PCs can either try to work their way through the bureaucracy of the Dawning Star Republic to get permits to enter the Council Ruin, or just hope they can avoid being seen. Before the PCs set out they run into a group of relic hunters, the Black Wheel Gang, who are also heading to the Council Ruin after hearing about the map through the black market or other dubious channels, creating a sense of urgency for the PCs.

Once the PCs set out for the Council Ruin they

have a mostly uneventful trip initially, but as they close on the ruins they run into a tribe of velin who warn them against entering the Council Ruins, informing the PCs of their legends surrounding it in the process. Later the PCs come across a set of tracks and slain murcows that were killed the night before by a group of vaasi foraging from the Council Ruin. The smell of fresh meat soon attracts a small pack of Dawson dragons, and the PCs may end up with a fight on their hands. If the PCs have access to a flying vehicle they may choose to bypass these encounters, but instead run into a mass migration of bluehook birds that may make their trip an extremely trying one.

If the PCs do not have a permit to be there, they may have to avoid several groups of Dawning Star archaeologists who are working in the area of the Council Ruin. The PCs also must find a way into the immense structure, which is largely immune to conventional weapons. When the PCs do find a way in they are quickly beset by a colony of spitter spiders that have taken up residence within the Council Ruin, and while the PCs attempt to avoid the spitter spiders the Black Wheel Gang strikes from behind, accidentally collapsing a wall behind the PCs to trap them inside the Council Ruin.

The PCs can only keep moving by going into the subterranean levels of the Council Ruin, a delicate process that must be taken slowly to avoid causing larger cave-ins. This is made more difficult by occasional still-functioning security systems which attempt to stop the PCs. As the PCs reach one of the lowest levels of the ruin they are attacked by a group of vaasi that have taken up residence in the Council Ruin while they try to bypass its remaining defenses. Upon exploring the lowest level of the Council Ruin, the PCs find an area that is still heavily guarded by security systems that allow them to pass since they are not vaasi. Inside they find an artificial intelligence entity that attempts to tell them what is hidden beneath the Council Ruin and that they should proceed carefully, but unfortunately language barriers probably prevent this from being very effective. With other, possibly less scrupulous relic hunters on their heels the PCs may feel obliged to ignore the artificial intelligence entity.

Shortly after their discussion with the entity begins, the vaasi remaining in the Council Ruin begin a last push to try and get through the remaining security systems. As the security systems begin to fail the artificial intelligence entity urges the PCs to take the treasure hidden in the next room, a stable artificial singularity that once powered the star harvester, the device used by the vaasi to harvest the power of the stars. The PCs must get it out of the Council Ruin so the vaasi do not get their hands on it.

The PCs escape to the roof out of the Council Ruin via an escape hatch, but now must climb down. Once they reach the ground they encounter

the Black Wheel Gang. While the Black Wheel Gang's first reaction is to attack the PCs, once the vaasi show up they may become reluctant allies. The battle continues outside the Council Ruin. Along with some archaeologists and velin, the PCs must organize their defense against the vaasi boiling up from below in the hopes they can last long enough for help to arrive.

USING THIS ADVENTURE IN OTHER SETTINGS • • •

If this adventure is going to be used in settings other than DAWNING STAR, some changes need to be made, but it will fit well into any d20 science-fiction campaign that has ancient alien civilizations possessed of fantastic scientific accomplishments. Any planet with ancient ruins can be used as the location for this adventure and the terrain around the Council Ruin can be easily changed to something other than plains. The Council Ruin could be built by any ancient advanced civilization, and the artificial singularity need not be the former weapon of the Vaasi Empire. It could instead be something that was created in a fit of vanity, or some type of prototype power source. The main thing that has to be maintained is that the artificial singularity is extremely dangerous and the vaasi want it. The Council Ruin and the devices contained within it need to be suitably advanced to be completely beyond normal tech levels.

If need be the vaasi can be replaced with any appropriately villainous alien species that once had some manner of technological skill, even if they do not have it currently. Alternately they could be depicted as a group of all but forgotten ancient conquerors trying to attain the weapons and tools that once led them to victory. Other than evil intent, a preference for darkness, and a desire to acquire the artificial singularity the vaasi can be changed completely to fit any given setting. Some of the security devices in the Council Ruin are designed to specifically protect against vaasi intrusion, indicative of the long history between the Star Confederation and the Vaasi Empire. If the aliens used to replace the vaasi do not have a similar history of ancient wars these security systems should be altered to attack all comers or removed entirely.

The political groups and factions used in this adventure may be easily changed to other political entities that are part of the setting being used. Any lawful and organized government can replace the Dawning Star Republic, while the faction-camps can be changed to resistance groups, criminal organizations, or other groups of trouble makers. Maximillian Dagos can be replaced with any rich individual who would be interested in acquiring alien relics or technological marvels, regardless of the legality of the situation.

THE MAP ITSELF

The map leading to the Council Ruin is a scrap of Star Confederation long-wear cloth that is highly resistance to damage or marring of any sort. While it may be held without difficulty, any type of paint, dirt, or ink automatically slides right off its surface without making a mark. Short of damaging the longwear cloth there is no way to permanently alter the image on it. The map has energy resistance 30, a hardness of 20, and 10 hit points. Due to special ink used in its creation electronic methods used to copy or scan the map into a computer automatically fail; when the map is introduced to bright light it becomes temporarily transparent. The map is two feet square and comes with a string of similar material to allow it to be rolled up and tied shut when not needed. There is no text on the map; it only contains images.

The map is split into two sections, one of which details the continent of Dawnhome. Terrain and a handful of settlements are depicted, but all these settlements were long ago reduced to ruins and none are labeled. The only one of note is the fortress ruin north of Greenville is noted on the map with a white circle. The Council Ruin is marked prominently to stand out from the other settlements and a line leads from the Council Ruin to the other portion of the map: a close up of the Council Ruin detailing its fifty above ground and twenty subterranean levels by way of a cross-section of the building. In the center of the lowest level of the Council Ruin a room is circled, indicating the location of the artificial singularity. A large black circle dominates the room, giving some hint to what the room contains.

CHAPTER 1: GETTING STARTED • • •

In this chapter the PCs get their hands on the map and clues that lead to the Council Ruin and the artificial singularity. The encounters should be run in the listed order but only the first encounter is necessary to continue the adventure.

♦ ENCOUNTER 1 Getting the Map

For this adventure to begin the PCs must acquire the map and information detailing the location of the artificial singularity within the Council Ruin.

♦ THE FIRST STEP

If the PCs have played *THE EDGE OF SHADOW* they already have their hands on the map, in addition to possibly having the force field projector. In this case they may wish to head directly to the Council Ruin after getting the map, meaning they may skip ahead to Chapter 2. Introducing Encounter 2 from this chapter in a town they visit for supplies on the way may be a good way to get the rival relic hunters into the adventure early.

If the PCs have not played *The Edge of Shadow* it is assumed someone else entered the fortress ruin near Greenville, ended up with the map, and sold hand drawn copies of it to several other factions. The factions that end up with the map will all want to try to recover the relic from the Council Ruin as soon as possible, and may be willing to send less-than-qualified individuals for sake of expediency. Each of the major factions on Eos would be interested in gaining a relic, especially one as impressive as the force field projector, so everyone that hears about the expedition is likely to send their own agents, even if they don't have a copy of the map and just intend to follow those who do.

♦ ENCOUNTER 1a Dawning Star Republic Citizens

Characters who are members of or known to the Dawning Star Republic will be contacted by Silas Williams, Assistant Director of Xeno-History within the Dawning Star Republic's Department of Science. Assistant Director Williams ended up with the map after it was found near Greenville due to his department's experience with relics, and has been studying it for the past few days. He is very interested in investigating the ruins, but the Science Department is currently more interested in the material the map is made of, thinking that since the Council Ruin is regularly patrolled, they have plenty of time to find whatever relic may be waiting there. Assistant Director Williams is supposed to hand over the map to the Xeno-Materials department in a few days, but before doing so wants to arrange for someone to follow the map. Assistant Director Williams suspects, and rightfully so, that in

the week since the map was discovered at least one copy of it has been made, making his mission all the more urgent.

If the PCs are not within Dawning Star City at the beginning of this adventure the PC who has the most scientific training, highest reputation, or most connection to the Republic is contacted via the Eonet by Assistant Director Williams. The message contains the following text:

Have need of skilled individuals to retrieve valuable item from remote location. Republic sanctioned operation. Compensation negotiable. Contact Assistant Director Silas Williams at the Department of Science, House of Congress, Dawning Star City. Please hurry, time sensitive.

The players may then at any time in the next few days meet with Assistant Director Williams, as detailed below.

If the PCs are in Dawning Star City, Assistant Director Williams sends a pair of police officers to bring the PCs to his office. The police officers will be looking specifically for the one with the most scientific training, highest reputation, or most connections to the Republic.

Read the follow text aloud during any time when the PCs are out on the streets of the city:

You hear a clipped clearing of the throat behind you that sounds more for communication than bodily need, turning to see a pair of Dawning Star City police officers standing behind you. One holds an info-comp, and he seems to be comparing your appearances to something on the screen. The other stands with his arms crossed, looking slightly annoyed about whatever duty he is fulfilling. After looking back and forth between your faces and the screen he puts the info-comp away on his belt, obviously thinking he's found what he was looking for.

"Excuse me, but Assistant Director Williams of the Department of Science has requested your presence immediately at the House of Congress. He wishes to speak with you about some official Republic business and does not have time to be kept waiting. Now

if you'll come with us," the police officer gestures to a S-15 Styler Ground transport painted in the gray and blue of the Dawning Star Republic parked a short distance away.

While the police officers do not mean to be menacing, they are not happy to be running errands for some scientist instead of doing their normal jobs, and on some level they assume the PCs have done or will do something wrong if they are being summoned in such a matter. They will not try to take the PCs against their will, but will suggest it is in their best interest to go along with them. If attacked the police will respond with appropriate force and call for backup; any PC who attacks a police officer of the Dawning Star Republic is going to be in sufficient trouble that participating in this adventure as an agent of the Republic is impossible, though being backed by the faction-camps or taking part as an independent are both possible. If the PCs flat-out refuse they will be bombarded by messages over the Eonet from Assistant Director Williams for the next eight hours and a second visit by the police that happens in similar format. If the PCs refuse all of these requests, Assistant Director Williams moves on to find his agents elsewhere.

Assuming the PCs go with the two police officers to the House of Congress read the following aloud:

The drive to the House of Congress is surprisingly quick despite the heavy traffic at the center of Dawning Star City, as the police officer driving the S-15 employs the siren and lights for most of the trip. The officers bring the vehicle to one of the rear delivery entrances of the House of Congress, stopping in front of a loading dock piled high with boxes and containers. Among them stands a small dark skinned man wearing a rumpled suit that looks to have been worn for at least three days straight. His face is hidden beneath a thick graying beard and large glasses, making his furtive, paranoid glances around the surrounding area look all the more comical.

"I told you to bring them in quietly! With that siren half the city knows something is going on!" the man says, oblivious in his panic to the fact that police sirens are nothing strange in Dawning Star City. The police officers share a look of annoyance

before getting back in their S-15 and heading out of the garage, obviously happy to be on to other duties. The small wrinkled man in front of you spends a second recomposing himself before extending a hand in greeting.

"Greetings, citizens. I am Silas Williams, Assistant Director of Xeno-History in the Department of Science. We don't have a lot of time, so I'm going to be blunt. I've heard you people have the skills to get...interesting tasks done quickly and quietly. But nothing illegal, just a little...sketchy. Outside the city, archaeology work. But not like digging and stuff; dealing with ruins and xenofoms and stuff. I can trust you right? I hear money buys secrecy, so I've got money. Are you interested?"

If the PCs ask for more information or say they are interested, Assistant Director Williams continues. If the PCs flat out say they are not interested Assistant Director Williams will look disappointed and then leave quickly. Attacking Assistant Director Williams will get them in nothing but trouble; although he does not pose much of a threat, Assistant Director Williams has many friends and assaulting him will quickly gather the attention of the Dawning Star City Police.

Assuming the PCs say they are interested, read the following text aloud:



"Great, great. This map came into my department two days ago. It's old, real old. Like as old as the ruins of this planet and it is extremely resistant to damage."

Assistant Director Williams pulls a folded up piece of cloth from his pocket and unfolds it to reveal a map of the continent Dawnhome, along with what appears to be a close up of the Council Ruin located to the south and west of Dawning Star City. He tries with all his might to tear the map, but with no success.

"In five days it has to go from my department to Xeno-Materials for research, and then who knows when we'll get our hands on it again! I need you to go to the Council Ruin and see if this map leads you to anything, like a relic or some such. This map was found in a ruin to the south near Greenville with a relic of massive power and...yeah, it's a neat relic. Anyway, we hope to find another relic at the end of the map, one that may be very useful in figuring out the history behind all these ruins." A noise somewhere in the loading dock disrupts his speech and Assistant Director Williams glances around furtively.

"The group that found the first relic was independents working for my department, and I think they may have made copies of the map and given it to other relic hunters or maybe even the faction-campers. I have a copy of the map here, but the original may be important so you can take it. I've also got transportation lined up if you need, it along with all the paperwork for getting access to the Council Ruin. The velin don't like us going near it, so you've got to have all sorts of forms and permissions to go inside. You'll have to get there and back in four days, which is when the map has to go to Xeno-Materials. I can pay you..." the Assistant Director stops talking and pulls out an info-comp, does some calculations, and holds it up for you to see the numbers it displays. "Sound good?"

The amount he offers will give each of the PCs a +6 increase to their Wealth bonus; though he may be bargained up to a +7 bonus with a successful opposed Barter check. Assuming they agree, he ushers them into another area of the loading dock where a G-3 Survey vehicle awaits them, ready to go and equipped for supplies (see the sidebar below). They may take their own vehicles if they wish, as long as Assistant Director Williams believes they can complete the mission and return in four days. Assistant Director Williams tells them the G-3 is outfitted with the necessary provisions, hands them the paperwork to get them past any Republic officials they may meet, and encourages them to leave as soon as possible. The PCs may wish to pick up a few other supplies and gear, but should head out soon to make the deadline and can then head to encounter 2.

◆ NPCs

Dawning Star City Police Officers (Tough Ord. 2/Dedicated Ord. 2) ◆ CR 3

Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 2d10+2d6+8; hp 25; MAS 15; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 18, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (+4 class, +1 Dex, +3 armor); BAB +4; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, tonfa) or +4 melee (1d3 electrical and stun, stun gun) or +3 ranged (2d8, EDF-9 Auto Pistol); Full +4 melee (1d6+1, tonfa) or +3 melee (1d3 electrical and stun, stun gun) or +3 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 Auto Pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL Dawning Star Republic; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +4; AP 0; Rep +1; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Law Enforcement

Skills: Drive +7, Intimidate +4, Investigate +6, Knowledge (Civics) +4, Knowledge (Streetwise) +5, Read/Write (English), Sense Motive +8, Speak Language (English), Spot +6.

Talents: -

Feats: Armor Proficiency (Light), Attentive, Brawl, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency

Possessions: EDF-9 auto pistol with 5 clips, light combat armor, night stick, radio, stun gun, info-comp, uniform, badge

Assistant Director Silas Williams (Smart Ord. 8) ◆ CR 7

Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 8d6+8; hp 35; MAS 12; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 12, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+3 class, -1 Dex); BAB +3; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d3 nonlethal, punch); Full +3 melee (1d3 nonlethal, punch); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL Dawning Star Republic; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +8; AP 0; Rep +3; Str 10, Dex 9, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 11.



PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Academic

Skills: Barter +5, Computer Use +14, Decipher Script +16, Drive +3, Investigate +14, Knowledge (Current Events) +11, Knowledge (History) +16, Knowledge (Technology) +16, Knowledge (Theology and Philosophy) +16, Profession (Scholar) +13, Read/Write Language (English, French, Indian, Mandarin Chinese, Swahili, Unispeak), Research +16, Search +14, Speak Language (English, French, Indian, Mandarin Chinese, Swahili, Unispeak).

Talents: None

Feats: Educated x2, Iron Will, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Studious

Possessions: Info-comp, clothes, pencils, pens, paper, glasses

◆ ENCOUNTER 1b Faction-Campers

If the PCs were not the ones who retrieved the map from the ruin in *The Edge of Shadow*, the relic hunters who did so have sold a copy to the Eos Freedom League. The EFL hopes to acquire whatever relics may be found in the Council Ruin for its own use. The individual put in charge of this operation is Maria Caias, an EFL agent who specializes in recovering relics, or at least arranging for someone else to recover relics. Unfortunately most of her normal contacts and agents are already assigned to jobs, so Maria has to go outside her normal channels to get some help. Assuming the PCs are known to the faction-camps, either as allies or just skilled independents, she will contact them about taking on the job. She attempts to contact the PCs through the Eonet or through messengers if they are in an EFL allied settlement, with the following message.

I have need of some discreet individuals to handle getting an item out of an old, collapsed building. Squatters may be in the building. Substantial pay and equipment provided. Meet me in two days at the northeast corner of the Earth Memorial Park in Dawning Star City at 12:00PM if interested.

A friend.

Assuming the PCs are interested in the job they have to make it to Dawning Star City in two days. Once they reach the park finding Maria Caias is easy as she is looking for them. Once they reach the northeast corner of the park read the following text aloud.

Like most days, at noon the Earth Memorial Park is filled with workers on their lunch breaks, kids playing, and families having a quick picnic. While few people visit the park after hours thanks to the rather seedy neighborhoods that surround it, during the day it is full of commotion and people. You're not sure how to meet your contact and spend some time worrying about this before (the character in the back of the party) is tapped on the shoulder.

Behind you among the throng of people stands a middle aged, fit woman wearing a grey business suit that is ubiquitous among the white collar workers of Dawning Star. Her expansive sunglasses make it difficult to get a feeling for her facial features, though she is doubtlessly someone who stays well groomed. In her hand is a steel briefcase that seems to be connected to her arm by duracable. "I believe we have a meeting." She says, gesturing toward a picnic table as she walks toward the same table.

If the PCs sit down she continues her briefing, as detailed below. If they attempt to leave she lets them and will have no further communication with them, moving on to other avenues. Any kind of disruption in the park will attract the attention of all those nearby as well as the police shortly thereafter, which is something Maria Caias does not want to deal with. If the PCs do cause a commotion she will immediately try to disappear into the crowd.

The woman sits down at the table and opens her briefcase, pulling out a small rectangular device with a single button, which she presses as she puts it down on the table. "No one may eavesdrop on us using standard electronic means now. My associates and I have come into possession of a map to the Council Ruin that indicates the suspected location of a valuable relic in the bottom of the Council Ruin. We wish to acquire that relic, and are willing to hire you to acquire it. We need the relic in five days or else the Dawning Star Republic is likely to send in their own recovery team and beat us to it. You will find a G-3 survey vehicle parked one hundred yards north of here." Reaching into her briefcase she draws out a key and puts it on the table. "Here is the key. A copy of the map and appropriate supplies are already in the G-3. We expect it and any unused supplies to be returned in four days time. We will pay you half in advance, half after completion."

She begins fishing around in her briefcase and pulls out a cloth bag that looks to be holding piles of credit chips. "The Dawning Star Republic and several other groups have copies of this map as well, and entrance to the Council Ruin is restricted to individuals with permits, so you had best find a way to sneak in. We will meet here at the same time in five days to make the final exchange." She waits for you to count the money, crossing her arms over her chest.

The money is sufficient to grant all the PCs a +4 increase to their Wealth bonus now and a further +4 increase after the mission. Maria Caias is not interested in bargaining further, but will allow the PCs to keep the G-3 if they succeed in an opposed Barter check (it's stolen anyway, though it has been sufficiently camouflaged that most police inspections will not notice this). If the PCs agree she gives them the key and leaves immediately. Finding the G-3 is no problem, and inside they find the equipment listed below in addition to a copy of the map.



◆ NPCs:

Maria Caias

(Charismatic Ord. 4/Smart Ord. 3) ◆ CR 6

Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 7d6; hp 25; MAS 10; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 17, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+2 class, +1 Dex, +4 armor); BAB +3; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (1d3 nonlethal, punch), +4 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 Auto Pistol); Full +2 melee (1d3-1 nonlethal, punch), +4 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 Auto Pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL EFL; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +5; AP 0; Rep +4; Str 9, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 13.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Dissident

Skills: Barter +8, Bluff +10, Computer Use +9, Diplomacy +10, Disguise +10, Forgery +9, Gather Information +10, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (Streetwise) +13, Knowledge (Technology) +13, Profession (Handler) +9, Read/Write Language (English, Indian, Mandarin Chinese, Swahili), Research +9, Search +9, Sense Motive +9, Speak Language (English, Indian, Mandarin Chinese, Swahili).

Talents: None

Feats: Armor Proficiency (Light), Attentive, Deceptive, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Trustworthy

Possessions: Concealable vest, EDF-9 Auto Pistol in concealed holster, 3 clips, cell phone, business suit, info-comp, steel briefcase containing incriminating documents

THE G-3 SURVEY VEHICLE

An off road vehicle designed for exploration, terraforming, and transport duties, this vehicle is ubiquitous on Eos. Any common, non-military all-terrain vehicle can be used as a replacement in other settings.

PCs working for the faction-camps, the Dawning Star Republic, or Maximillian Dagos are loaned one of these vehicles for their mission. This G-3 has been modified to reduce its cargo room and increase the passenger capacity.

PL: 3

Crew: 1

Passengers: 5

Cargo: Large

Initiative: -1

Maneuver: +0

Top Speed: 120 (12)

Defense: 8

Hardness: 10

Hit Points: 40

Size: Huge

The G-3 survey vehicle contains the following pieces of equipment:

- ◆ 6 backpacks
- ◆ 6 explorer outfits
- ◆ Deluxe electrical tool kit
- ◆ Deluxe evidence kit
- ◆ Fast use medkit
- ◆ 4 doses of antitox chemical
- ◆ 4 doses or sporekill chemical
- ◆ Lock pick set
- ◆ Deluxe mechanical tool kit
- ◆ 2 electro-optical binoculars
- ◆ 20 chemical light sticks
- ◆ 6 sets of climbing gear
- ◆ 2 compasses
- ◆ Maps of the area between Dawning Star City and the Council Ruin
- ◆ 6 portable glow lamps
- ◆ 2 battery flood lights
- ◆ 6 gas masks
- ◆ GPS receiver
- ◆ Portable stove
- ◆ Freeze dried rations for 6 for 5 days
- ◆ Puritizer
- ◆ 6 sleeping bags
- ◆ 8 person dome tent
- ◆ 500 feet of duracable
- ◆ 4 grappler tags
- ◆ 4 universal communicators
- ◆ 4 spare tires

If the PCs sell any of this equipment or the G-3 itself they will be accused of theft on their return and their pay docked, if not brought up on formal charges, assuming they have not made other arrangements (unless the characters are working for the EFL, which doesn't really care). Equipment that is lost in the line of duty will probably be ignored, but getting the G-3 blown up will not go over well.

◆ ENCOUNTER 1c Independents

Characters who have no connection to either the Dawning Star Republic or the faction-camps can be hooked into this adventure by being hired by Maximillian Dagos. While a citizen of the Republic, Maximillian Dagos often puts his own economic concerns before those of the Republic, but never in such a manner that can be traced back to him. If using this option read the following text aloud for the player with the highest Reputation bonus in the party.

"Excuse me, sir." The speaker next to you is obviously an air runner, decked out in a flight suit bearing the insignia of the Morning Bright Delivery Service. His features are hidden behind the mirrored faced plate of his helmet, but in his hands he holds a box with your name on it.

"Delivery for you. No return address and I don't know who the client is, so don't ask. I just deliver this stuff." He hands you the box and turns around quickly, walking back to a hovercycle parked a short distance away. The box itself has only your name for external features, being little more than a cardboard box wrapped in plain brown paper. Inside a soft beeping can be heard.

If the character succeeds at a Computer Use or Knowledge (Technology) check (DC 10) he recognizes the beeping as that of an info-comp with a message waiting. A Search check (DC 10) will reveal there is nothing insidious about the box, and all it contains is a single info-comp with a message waiting. If the PC accesses the message it displays the following text.

Good evening. I apologize for the dramatic method of contact, but I wish to retain a certain amount of anonymity in these proceedings. I have need to hire people of unusual talents to retrieve a relic from the bottom levels of the Council Ruin to the southwest of Dawning Star City. As you no doubt know, this area is considered off limits to civilians without permits, which can take some time to acquire, and which I do not have time for. So infiltrating the ruins will take some care. The ruins are doubt-

less filled with spitter spiders and worse xenofoms, so you'd best be on your toes and handy with a gun. A copy of the map is contained in this info-comp in a file that is protected and cannot be copied to another computer. If you agree to this mission, which you can indicate by replying to this message, an appropriately large amount of money will be transferred to the bank accounts of you and your cohorts. A G-3 survey vehicle can be found 100 yards to the north of your current position with the keys inside and properly outfitted for this mission. In five days I will activate a homing beacon that has been planted on you and send an agent to pick up the relic. I await your reply.

After the message concludes the info-comp awaits the PC to reply to the message, at which point the info-comp displays a scanned image of a hand-drawn copy of the map, the money is transferred to the accounts of the PCs increasing their Wealth bonus by +9, and the G-3 survey vehicle is placed in the appropriate place for the PCs to pick up. The PCs can make their own plans from there, but there are tracking bugs planted in the info-comp, the G-3, and all the large gear stored in the G-3, so in five days the minions of Maximillian Dagos are going to come for the PCs looking for the relic. If the PCs have accepted the money and don't have the relic, things will probably go poorly for them.

If the PCs try to hack the info-comp to gain information about their client a Computer Use check (DC 35) will reveal the info-comp was programmed by a programming company called Prime Data, located in Dawning Star City. Like the Morning Bright Delivery Service, Prime Data will share no information about their client, but six hours of research and a Research skill check (DC 35) will reveal both companies are partially owned by Maximillian Dagos. More extensive efforts to confirm the source of the info-comp and the mission would take many hours, time the PCs do not have if they wish to undertake the mission.

Assuming the PCs accept the mission they can continue on to the next encounter. If they chose to not reply using the info-comp nothing further happens, though the offer does remain open for six hours. Maximillian Dagos is not interested in bargaining and will simply look for help elsewhere if the PCs push too hard for more money.

◆ ENCOUNTER 1d Other Options

Alternately the PCs could come into possession of the map from a known contact or ally, such as a former teacher, a friendly relic hunter, or even a family member. Individuals with contacts in the relic trade or exploration are the best fit for this situation, but also those involved in black market operations, cartographers, and surveyors also make excellent individuals for passing on the map to the PCs. If such individuals have already been established in the campaign they make an excellent means to hook the PCs into the adventure in a way that feels completely natural. In this case the PCs are not likely to receive any payment for their efforts to follow the map, but instead will be given a share of the profit from the adventure, if they don't claim the artificial singularity outright. Also they may not be as well equipped as a party funded by the Dawning Star Republic or the faction-camps, relying solely on their own funds to complete the mission.

◆ Encounter 1e Better to Ask Permission

Characters who are not working for the Dawning Star Republic do not have the necessary permits to enter the Council Ruin legally, and thus will have to dodge the Republic officials who may be in the area. Alternatively, if they think of it they can try and request a permit from the various colonial departments that make up the Republic government, with Science being the most likely to grant such a permit. To attain a permit the characters must venture to the Hall of Congress, come up with a suitable cover story for why they need to enter the Council Ruin in the first place, and spend four hours filling out forms and going through background checks. Any character with a documented criminal record in the Republic will automatically fail this process, and probably be arrested as well.

To successfully navigate the bureaucracy of the Republic, one of the characters must succeed in a Knowledge (Civics) check (DC 25). To convince the bureaucrats that the permit is needed a Bluff check (DC 25) is required. Any characters that have known connections to the EFL or do not seem to be scientists suffer a -4 penalty on their skill checks. If both of these checks are successful the characters leave with a one week permit to visit the Council Ruin and remove artifacts from there, but these artifacts must be catalogued by Republic archaeologists on site before they can be taken from the area. If the characters only succeed in one check they may receive a permit in the mail in three to six weeks after more thorough checks into their story are conducted, but for the purposes of this adventure they are out of luck.

OTHER CAMPAIGN SETTINGS

For other campaign settings any power group would likely be interested in a stable artificial singularity and thus back an effort to obtain it. The encounter described with the Dawning Star Republic could be used for some other force of law and order, while the faction-camp meeting could represent the actions of any of a number of covert or criminal organizations.

Alternately the PCs could come into possession of the map through a treasure chest, research, or other completely different means.

All that matters is that they end up with the map, preferably in such a fashion that several other people know about it as well.

◆ ENCOUNTER 2 Rivalry

As the PCs are heading out of town, they run into another group of relic hunters, the Black Wheel Gang (see Appendix A) who are interested in the map the PCs have after hearing rumors of its existence. They don't know for sure that the PCs have the map, or even if the PCs are involved in whole matter of the Council Ruin, but according to their contacts in the black market and other sources they think the PCs are the right people. If the PCs got the map from the Dawning Star Republic, the faction-camps, or Maximillian Dagos, all of these sources have enough leaks in their operations to let knowledge of the existence of the map escape. If somehow the PCs themselves attained the map and let no one know of its existence, such as if they attained it through *The Edge of Shadow*, skip this encounter as the PCs should be rewarded for their cleverness.

◆ THE CHASE

A short time after the PCs accept the job of following the map a pair of non-descript, gray S-15 ground transports begin following them through the city, be they using the G-3 or some other ground vehicle. This encounter should take place after the PCs are done running errands before their mission

and while they are heading out of the city toward the Council Ruin, or to their aircraft if they are using air transportation. If the PCs are in another settlement or out in the wilderness change the encounter accordingly. All the PCs should make Spot checks (DC 15) to notice the two vehicles. If any succeed read the following aloud.

Dawning Star City is a busy place most of the time, but it seems strangely quiet today. The streets are not as filled with cars and pedestrians, allowing for a leisurely drive as you make your final preparations before heading out of the city. While turning onto the Perimeter you see two S-15 ground transports pull onto the highway behind you...the same S-15 transports that have been following you for at least twenty blocks and three turns. It seems someone else is already interested in your mission.

The S-15 ground transports hold the Black Wheel Gang who hope to follow the PCs out of the city and then ambush them in the hopes of taking their copy of the map. One S-15 is driven by Kelena Tullah and holds Stafford and Jake while the other is driven by Telela with Rashad Tullah and one Black Wheel thug as passengers. These vehicles remain at least fifty feet back from the PCs until the PCs either leave the city, try to lose them, or attack.

If the PCs do not lose the Black Wheel Gang before leaving Dawning Star City after about ten minutes of driving the PCs are off the Perimeter road and on a four lane road heading southwest that turns into a two lane dirt road after five miles. There is little in the way of buildings or other people in the area. When they reach the four lane road the Black Wheel Gang attacks the PCs, trying to stop their vehicle by shooting out its tires. The Black Wheel Gang is not interested in any loss of life and once they have managed to stop the PCs' vehicle they will demand the map. If they are given the map they leave without causing further trouble, but if the PCs refuse they toss in sonic grenades and open fire with tangle guns to try and disable the PCs, taking the map after the PCs are disabled.

If the PCs try to lose the two S-15s a chase begins across the Perimeter Road of and possibly the surrounding countryside. During the chase the PCs and the relic hunters will have to deal with traffic, which is light at this time, and the police if they attract too much attention by speeding or pulling risky maneuvers. The Perimeter Road of Dawning Star City is an eight lane highway with cement

dividers separating the traffic going in different directions and guarding the outside of the highway. If the PCs are able to pull more than one thousand feet ahead of the S-15s the Black Wheel Gang gives up the chase.

The Black Wheel Gang will not attack the PCs in public in Dawning Star City, even if attacked. If the PCs do fire on them, the Black Wheel Gang will call the police and try to get the PCs arrested, while leaving their own role in the attack out and trying to escape the notice of the police if possible.

If at any time two of the Black Wheel Gang take more than half their hit points in damage or their vehicles are in danger of being disabled they will break off the fight and flee. They are interested in turning a profit, not getting killed.

◆ NPCs

The abilities of the rival relic hunters, the Black Wheel Gang, are listed in Appendix A.

CHAPTER 2: GETTING THERE • • •

In this chapter the PCs leave Dawning Star City and reach the Council Ruin, but have several obstacles to overcome during the journey. If the PCs are flying to the Council Ruin they may skip these encounters if they wish; it is best to allow them to see the encounter on the ground and bypass it if they wish. Flying PCs should run into **OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: MIGRATION Period** to spice things up.

The distance to the Council Ruin from Dawning Star City is roughly 600 miles, meaning a G-3 can cover it safely in 16-24 hours, though bad weather and poor road conditions may make this more difficult. It is assumed the PCs leave Dawning Star City at noon or shortly thereafter and then arrive at the Council Ruin the following morning, though if the PCs stop to sleep for the evening they will instead arrive in mid afternoon. There are no paved roads between Dawning Star City and the Council ruin, only dirt roads.



◆ ENCOUNTER 1

Velin Warnings

The velin believe the Council Ruin to be a holy place that should not be disturbed without great need, and out of respect the Dawning Star Republic has instituted a system allowing only a small number of researchers near the ruin at a time. Despite regular Dawning Star Republic patrols in the area by the militia and Republic Rangers, the velin keep their own watch on the Council Ruin. A recent surge in signs of vaasi activity in the area has heightened their concern and they have increased their patrols in the region as a result, one of which runs into the PCs.

Read the following text aloud:

You've been following a dirt road that barely qualifies as such for several hours now and have several more to go before you reach the Council Ruin. The skies are clear of clouds, but a mass migration of bluehook birds often makes it difficult to see the sun as tens of thousands of birds take to the skies. The monotony of the plains of central Dawnhome have given you little to look at, but now some dark specks have appeared on the horizon. As you come closer it is apparent that the specks are a velin tribe on the move, all of its members mounted on Dawson dragons. It does seem rather small for a tribe, but once you get closer you see that it is not a tribe but a war party. All of its members are dressed in battle armor and carry a number of weapons. While they do not look hostile, they wave to your vehicle and gesture towards themselves, indicating for you to come closer.

If the PCs choose to bypass the velin war party, the velin cannot move fast enough to stop them, so the PCs may go on to the next encounter.

If the PCs stop, several of the velin gather around them, but not in a threatening manner, while the rest keep their watch on the surrounding plain, looking for vaasi activity.

Read the following text aloud:

Five of the velin bring their Dawson dragon mounts up to the side of your vehicle in a half circle, while the other twenty all look out over the plains, obviously watching for something. The velin in the middle of the

five facing you seems to be the oldest in the group and his mount is covered in tufts of fur, scales, and bones that seem to be trophies from past conflicts. Their weapons are worn but well cared for and their gnarled faces speak of many winters seen. The velin in the center of their formation, who also appears to be the oldest, makes a short clicking noise and his mount moves forward a few feet.

"I am Katijno of the Green Sea Tribe. I have been charged with guarding the Council Ruin for this moon and keep evil from entering it. Why do you head to the Council Ruin?"

The PCs must now convince Katijno that they mean to commit no foul deeds in the Council Ruin. Katijno accepts that humans wish to learn from it, and considers knowledge a worthwhile pursuit, so archaeologists and other scholars he allows to pass without difficulty. Those who seek power or wealth he will insist must turn back for this is not the place to seek such things. If the PCs let slip the existence of the map and that they seek something in the bottom of the Council Ruin, he will grow very concerned and ask to see the map. The velin do not know what exactly is at the bottom of the Council Ruin, but those velin who are involved in its defense know there is something powerful and terrible down there that must not be awakened. PCs who reveal the true purpose of their mission will have to work very hard to convince Katijno that they do not mean to profit from their mission and only seek knowledge. Considering the recent vaasi sightings in the area, Katijno may even be convinced that the time to remove the relics from the Council Ruin has come as they may be safer in Dawning Star City in the care of the Republic. As long as the PCs are respectful and come across as truthful, even if they aren't, Katijno is likely to allow them to continue, but this doesn't mean he won't menace and scare them into thinking he won't let them pass.

If the PCs conduct themselves particularly well Katijno will invite them to share a meal with him and the patrol group, which will appreciate the welcome change from eating in the saddle. The food is mainly dried murcow meat and unleavened bread with small amounts of a cheese-like spread the velin make from several herbs that grow in the region. While eating Katijno tells them of one of the legends surrounding the Council Ruin.

Read the following text aloud:

Katijno stops eating for a moment and closes his eyes, apparently in deep concentration. He opens them again he looks at you all, but looks past you at the same time, almost as if he is in a trance. "You travel to the Council Ruin, so you should know of it what we know. Long ago, when the ruins of this world were cities and many creatures walked its surface, the Council Ruin was where they came together and settled their tribal matters. Leaders traveled to it from across the stars, ruling wisely and fairly over a tribe of uncountable size. It was a place of peace and discussion where all could speak their mind."

"But in time a great darkness came from a foreign star, a darkness that wielded fearsome weapons and used them against the people who once ruled from the Council Ruin. In time some of these weapons were stolen and hidden across Eos and other worlds, including beneath the Council Ruin itself, but even without their greatest tools of war the great darkness overwhelmed this world and many others. Now only the vaasi remain from this darkness, but they still lurk about the ruins of this world, looking for the engines of destruction taken from them long ago. That is why we are here. We work to keep them out of the Council Ruin for great power still is hidden there."

"Be wary, friends, we have seen vaasi tracks in the area. They are about, and they may take interest in your efforts."

Katijno will only attack the PCs if they seem bent on entering the ruins with no regard for tradition, his warnings, or respect for the Council Ruin. Such individuals he must stop from entering the ruin, and once the characters start off in their vehicle he will have no chance to do so. The velin are not interested in killing the PCs, only restraining them and turning them over to the proper authorities. If the PCs attack the velin they respond with lethal force, and considering their superior numbers the PCs had better flee than try to make a stand up fight. If the PCs do attack the velin they will report the incident to the Dawning Star Republic and the PCs are now going to be wanted men.



♦ NPCs

Katijno, Elder Velin Warrior

While his body is aged now and no longer fit, Katijno has the instincts and skills of warrior. He knows much of the vaasi and the history of his people, and has been charged with training new warriors in how to fight those ancient evils. Slow and purposeful, he is never rash and continually counsels his students to always look and think before taking action. He is one of many warriors to leads patrols through the region around the Council Ruin, but recent vaasi sightings have caused him to stay on patrol for an extended period over the last few weeks. He generally trusts humans until he catches them doing something wrong, and is willing to give the PCs the benefit of the doubt. He is no master of reading lies in the words of others; he is a warrior and thus may be easy to fool.

Katijno, Velin Patrol Leader

(Velin Hunter 3/Velin Guardian 6) ♦ CR 9

Medium Humanoid (Velin); HD 9d8+27; hp 72; MAS 19; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 19, touch 14, flat-footed 19 (+5 class, -1 Dex, +5 armor); BAB +9; Grap +10; Atk +11 melee (1d10+1 or 1d8+1, kertaff spear), +8 ranged (1d8, velin war bow); Full +11/+6 melee (1d10+1 or 1d8+1, kertaff spear), +8/+3 ranged (1d8, velin war bow); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft. (10 ft. with kertaff spear doing 1d8+1 damage); SQ Guardian reputation, improved detect vaasi, low-light vision, region familiarity (Council Ruin and surrounding area), tribal collective memory, wilderness camouflage, wilderness training; AL Velin Tribal Council; SV Fort +10, Ref +2, Will +8; AP 10; Rep +1; Str 12, Dex 9, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 13.

PL Familiarity: 3**Occupation:** Hunter**Skills:** Handle Animal +5, Hide +6, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (History) +9, Listen +5, Move Silently +6, Navigate +9, Ride +9, Speak Language (English, Velin), Spot +5, Survival +11.**Talents:** None**Feats:** Alertness, Animal Affinity, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Medium), Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency (Kertaff Spear), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Velin War Bow), Guide, Improved Damage Threshold, Iron Will, Mounted Combat, Oathbound (Velin Tribal Council), Track, Weapon Focus (Kertaff Spear).**Possessions:** Velin battle armor, kertaff spear, velin war bow, 36 arrows, Dawson dragon, 5 days of rations**♦ VELIN PATROL MEMBERS**

These relatively inexperienced warriors are new to the duty of patrolling the Council Ruin and are apprehensive about living up to their duties. They are all disciplined and dedicated defenders of their people, and make up for their lack of experience with enthusiasm. They defer to Katijno in all matters and avoid speaking directly to humans when possible.

Velin Patrol Members**(Tough Ordinary 4) ♦ CR 3**

Medium Humanoid (Velin); HD 4d10+12; hp 34; MAS 20; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 21, touch 14, flat-footed 20 (+3 class, +1 Dex, +7 armor); BAB +3; Grap +5; Atk +5 melee (1d10+2 or 1d8+2), kertaff spear, +4 ranged (1d6+2, velin throwing blade); Full +5 melee (1d10+2 or 1d8+2), kertaff spear, +4 ranged (1d6+2, velin throwing blade); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft. (10 ft. with kertaff spear doing 1d8+2 damage); SQ detect vaasi, low-light vision; AL Velin Tribal Council; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +1; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 8, Wis 15, Cha 7.

PL Familiarity: 3**Occupation:** Hunter**Skills:** Ride +4, Survival +5.**Talents:** None**Feats:** Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Kertaff Spear), Mounted Combat, Improved Damage Threshold**Possessions:** Velin battle armor, kertaff spear, velin battle shield, 4 velin throwing blades**Dawson Dragon ♦ CR 4**

Large animal; HD 8d8+32; hp 68; MAS 18; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; Defense 18, touch 10, flat-footed 17 (+1 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size); BAB +6; Grap +14; Atk +9 melee (1d8+4, bite); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+4, bite) and +4 melee (1d6+2, 2 claws); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ improved grab, scent, tail slap; AL none; SV Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills: Jump +17, Spot +4, Survival +6.**Feats:** None.**Advancement:** 9-12 HD (Large).**♦ ENCOUNTER 2
Mad Beasts**

A group of vaasi recently infiltrated the Council Ruin in the hopes of finding something valuable within, relics and such. This has happened many times in the years since the fall of the Star Confederation, but this group is larger than previous groups. There is little to eat within the Council Ruin, as even vaasi consider spitter spiders poor fare, and they have been making forays into the surrounding plains under the cover of night to look for other sources of food. Being strict carnivores they have primarily been raiding murcow herds and Dawson dragon packs, and in this encounter the PCs spot some of their handiwork.

Read the following text aloud:

The plains of central Dawnhome are giving way now to the Bergen Lowlands, which are slowly starting to creep in from the north. You could smell it long before you could see it, the swamp and marsh having a most peculiar odor. Despite the change in terrain there is little else of interest to be seen other than an occasional aircraft flying overhead. With only three million people planet wide, it does leave a lot of empty, wide open spaces.

This made it all the more obvious when the dark spot first appeared on the horizon. Unlike some of the animal herds you've encountered, this dot is stationary and nearly in your path. After you get a little closer you see that a large number of blue-hook birds, notorious scavengers in this area, have broken off from the mass migration and are circling over the dark spot. Whatever it is, something died up ahead.

The PCs may choose to bypass the dark spot entirely and continue on. If they choose to investigate, read the following:

As you approach the dark spot it quickly becomes evident it is the scene of an attack of some sort, as blood is scattered over an area almost sixty feet across and several slaughtered murcows are lying about in heaps. The bodies are covered in blood flies and a flock of bluehook birds are rummaging through the remains. It will take a more careful inspection to figure out how long they have been here, but these look like relatively fresh kills. There are obvious tracks and blood trails leading toward the Council Ruin, but the grass in this area is extremely tall, making it difficult to see them for any great distance.

Any PC who spends five minutes examining the scene may make an Investigate or Treat Injury check (DC 10) to determine the murcows were killed sometime during the night before. There were at least fifty murcows slaughtered here. An Investigate or Treat Injury check (DC 25) reveals that the murcows were slaughtered without tools, but instead with claws and teeth. None of the murcow remains are good for food or hides. A character with the Track feat may make a Survival skill check (DC 20) to learn about the way the slaughter was conducted; the hunting creatures chased the murcows to the edge of the swamp, hedged them in against it, and then slaughtered them. A successful Survival check also reveals that the attacking creatures had unusual shaped, three clawed feet and seemed to run both on four and two legs. Any attempt to track the perpetrators gains a +4 bonus to Survival checks due to the obvious nature of the trail.

If the PCs spend more than ten minutes at the site of the slaughter each PC should make a Spot check (DC 10). Successful PCs notice there are three Dawson dragons approaching their position creeping through the tall grass, probably attracted by the smell of the slaughtered murcows. The Dawson dragons begin 100 ft. from the PCs and will charge if the PCs make any quick movements. If the PCs move slowly toward their vehicle they can escape without being attacked, but any loud noises or quick movements will spark the Dawson dragons to charge. The Dawson dragons will attempt to kill the PCs and eat them, but will flee if seriously injured.

◆ NPCs

Dawson Dragons ◆ CR 4

Large animal; HD 8d8+32; hp 68; MAS 18; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; Defense 18, touch 10, flat-footed 17 (+1 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size); BAB +6; Grap +14; Atk +9 melee (1d8+4, bite); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+4, bite) and +4 melee (1d6+2, 2 claws); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ improved grab, scent, tail slap; AL none; SV Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills: Jump +17, Spot +4, Survival +6.

Feats: None.

Advancement: 9-12 HD (Large).

◆ OPTIONAL ENCOUNTERS

The following encounters can be used if the GM feels the PCs are having too easy a time of things, or just to spice up the adventure. They are not required for the furtherance of the plot.

◆ LONG ARM OF THE LAW

Due to the sensitive nature of the Council Ruin and its importance to the velin, the Dawning Star Republic makes regular patrols through the region to stop treasure seekers and other undesirables from disturbing the Council Ruin. Considering how many relic hunters are criminals, and heavily armed criminals at that, this duty is taken very seriously and is overseen by experienced military and police officials. There is always at least one Republic Ranger on duty in the region to handle any problems that arise, and the PCs have the luck, either good or bad, of encountering her this day.

Republic Ranger Sasha Reyes has been patrolling the area around the Council Ruin for sev-



SASHA REYES

eral weeks, and is getting sick of people coming through without permits. What's more annoying in the last few days has been a large number of ranchers reporting nighttime attacks on their cattle, most of which are found slaughtered the next day. Several ranchers have gone missing as well, and Ranger Reyes is now more concerned with having a group of poachers and murderers than simple trespassers. She's got bigger fish to fry. She is currently out with a handful of militia patrolling on Styler Scout Bikes trying to cover as large an area as possible. If the PCs are wanted criminals or are wanted by the Republic for some other reason, springing this encounter on them may be a bit harsh as the Styler Scout Bikes can outrun their vehicles and Republic Rangers are nothing to sneeze at in a fight.

Read the following text aloud:

In the distance something is kicking up a sizable cloud of dust. While this is nothing new and you've seen several dust clouds thus far in your trip, caused by anything from vehicles to stampedes, this one is moving faster than the others. Soon its source comes into sight: five people on motorcycles, all of which are coming at you very quickly. The lead figure raises its hand and seems to be displaying a shiny metallic object of some kind and is yelling something over a loudspeaker, but it's hard to make out what is being said.

All the PCs should make Listen checks (DC 10) to understand the message over the loudspeaker. If successful, they can make out Ranger Reyes saying *"Stop in the name of the Republic! Republic Ranger incoming for inspection."* If the PCs try to make a run for it she will give chase, and considering the scout bikes can outrun a G-3 pretty handily they are not likely to escape. Running from a Republic Ranger tends to encourage the thought that the PCs are up to something, and while Ranger Reyes and the militia are loath to shoot at people, they have no problem with tires. If the PCs open fire on Ranger Reyes and the militia soldiers the return fire immediately and with intent to kill. Assuming the PCs stop, things go much easier. Read the following text aloud if the PCs stop:

The rider of the lead bike comes to a stop thirty feet away from your vehicle, the other four riders coming in behind her. The lead rider wears the uniform of a Republic Ranger, while the other four wear Dawning

Star Militia uniforms. All are armed with EDF-15 assault rifles and EDF-9 auto-pistols, some of which the militia soldiers grip nervously. The ranger takes her helmet off, revealing a woman of middling years, dark hair, and obvious Hispanic and Asian descent. "I'm Republic Ranger Sasha Reyes, and we've had some reports of cattle rustling, in addition to less pleasant activities, in the area. So just what are you fine people doing out here so far from town with no herd in tow?"

If the PCs are here on Republic business or have a permit for exploring the Council Ruin Ranger Reyes will let them pass without difficulty assuming they let her know, and have the paperwork to back it up. If not, they have to convince her they are not cattle rustlers or murderers. She will want to search their vehicle for anything suspicious, and any bits of murcow meat taken from ENCOUNTER 2 or heavy weapons will arouse her suspicion. As long as the PCs have a believable story as to why they are out near the Council Ruin and give no reason to suspect they are responsible for the recent murders and cattle slaughters they will be able to pass, but Ranger Reyes does not make it easy for them. In order to put pressure on them she will act like she assumes they are guilty right up until she lets them go, insinuating the whole time that they are up to no good in the hopes it will push them to do something rash.

◆ NPCs

Republic Ranger Sasha Reyes

A former rancher and terraforming surveyor, Sasha Reyes has spent more nights sleeping under the open sky than under a roof. She considers herself more a rancher than a law officer, having the same easygoing and nomadic style she has always had. She became a Ranger after many years service to the Republic as a scout in the militia, and later as a deputy in a number of posses. While she is not a well known Republic Ranger and her sector is largely thought to be an easy assignment, she is a fine Ranger. Few humans know the Bergen Lowlands and the area surrounding the Council Ruin as well as her. Ranger Reyes has little patience for criminals and those who waste her time, preferring to deal with particularly violent criminals using her own brand of justice. She is also unusually interested in crimes that affect ranchers, such as rustling, but that is more out of a lack of more serious crimes in her sector. The recent disappearances have been the most serious crime in the region for some years, and she is leaving no stone unturned in looking for the cause.

Sasha Reyes
(Tough Hero 4/ Rancher 4/ Lawman 3
Republic Ranger 1) ♦ CR 12

Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 3d8+9d10+36; hp 106; MAS 16; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 24, touch 21, flat-footed 22 (+9 class, +2 Dex, +3 armor); BAB +9; Grap +9; Atk +9 melee (1d8, whip stick), +12 ranged (2d8, EDF-15 Assault Rifle); Full +9/+4 melee (1d8, whip stick), +12/+7 ranged (2d8, EDF-15 Assault Rifle); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Force of law, ranger reputation, region familiarity (Council Ruin region), riding master, special mount, wild empathy, word of law; AL Dawning Star Republic; SV Fort +16, Ref +5, Will +9; AP 13; Rep +4; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 10.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Ranch-Hand

Skills: Barter +5, Diplomacy +6, Drive +9, Gather Information +6, Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (Civics) +7, Knowledge (Streetwise) +10, Navigate +6, Read/Write Language (English), Ride +10, Sense Motive +5, Speak Language (English), Survival +10.

Talents: Remain Conscious, Second Wind

Feats: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Animal Affinity, Armor Proficiency (Light), Confident, Great Fortitude, Mounted Combat, Mounted Gunplay, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Republic Militia Member, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Surface Vehicle Operation (Motorcycles), Trustworthy, Weapon Focus (EDF-15 Assault Rifle).

Possessions: Light combat armor, EDF-15 and 5 clips, EDF-9 and 4 clips, 2 tangler grenades, S-10E Styler Scout Bike, binoculars, compass, 10 days of rations, badge, flare, survival gear, sleeping bag, universal communicator

Dawning Star Militia

These militia soldiers are all local ranchers doing their duty to the Republic by helping Ranger Reyes try to get to the bottom of the cattle rustling and disappearances. They are all extremely interested in catching the perpetrators since it is their herds and friends who have suffered in these incidents and outsiders, like the PCs, seem the most likely culprits. They are not in the mood for hearing someone blame it on darklings and are interested in some payback.

Dawning Star Militia Members
(Tough Ordinary 4) ♦ CR 3

Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 4d10+8; hp 30; MAS 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 17, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+3 class, +1 Dex, +3 armor); BAB +3; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (1d4+1, survival knife), +4 ranged (2d8, EDF-15 Assault Rifle); Full +4 melee (1d4+1, survival knife), +4 ranged (2d8, EDF-15 Assault Rifle); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL Dawning Star Republic; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2; AP 0; Rep +1; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 8.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Ranch-Hand

Skills: Animal Handling +3, Drive +5, Navigate +4, Ride +5, Spot +2, Survival +5.

Talents: None

Feats: Armor Proficiency (Light), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Surface Vehicle Operation (Motorcycles)

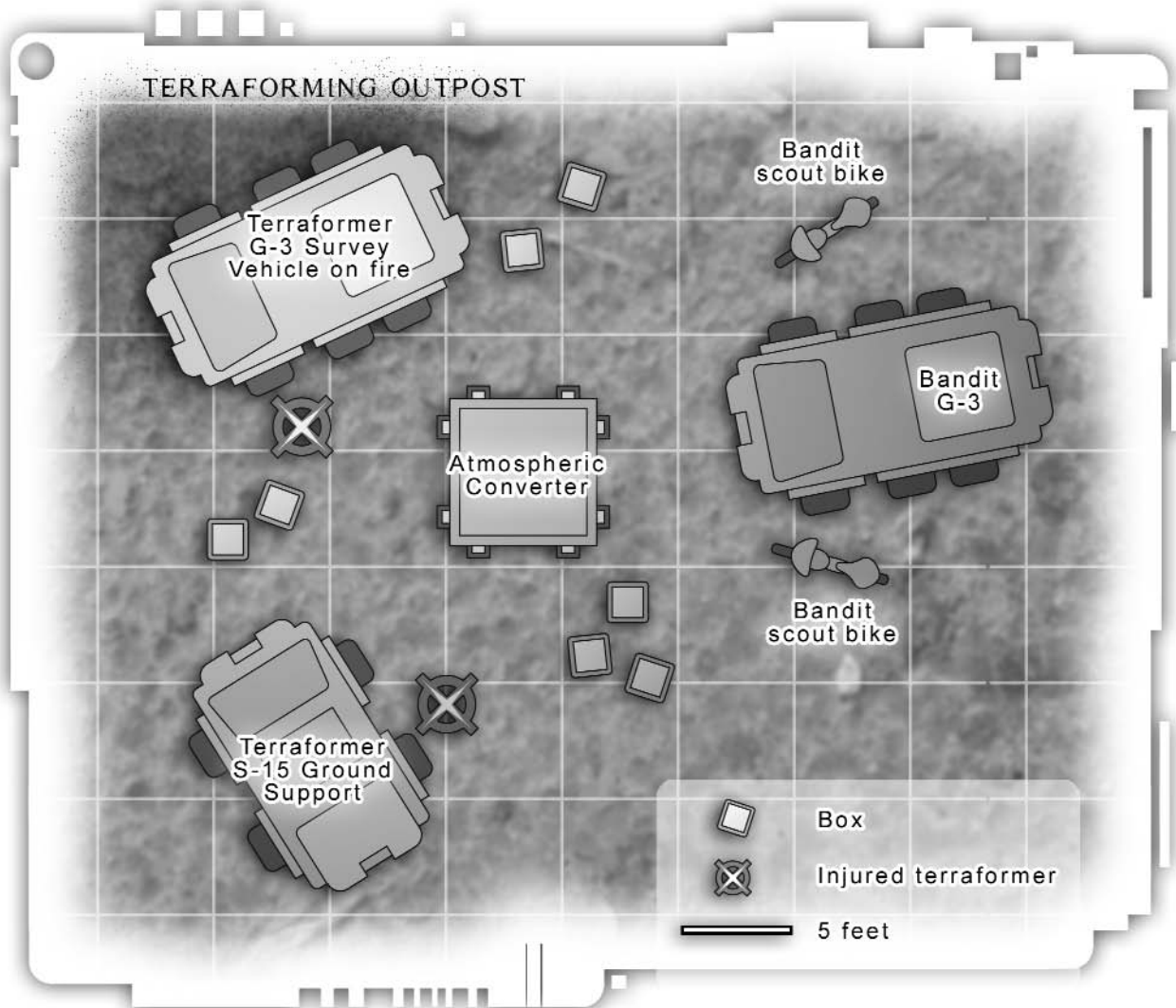
Possessions: Rough-outs, EDF-15 with 4 clips, EDF-9 with 3 clips, S-10E Style scout bike, survival knife, sleeping bag, 10 days rations, survival gear, universal communicator

♦ **TERRAFORMERS IN DISTRESS**

If the PCs are getting antsy about having to continually explain themselves and duck out of the way of the watchful eyes of the Republic or the velin, this encounter can help lighten the mood and give them something to fight. A group of bandits and cattle rustlers called the Patterson Four were traveling through the region surrounding the Council Ruin when they found a group of Dawning Star Republic terraformers setting up a temporary atmospheric converter to correct some atmospheric anomalies in the area. As terraforming gear can often be sold for a respectable profit to the Terraforming Guild, the Patterson Four decided to try to make a quick credit and steal the atmosphere converter. Now the two groups are engaged in a gunfight that is not going well for the terraformers.

To begin this encounter read the following text aloud:

At first it seemed like another cloud of dust up ahead, just off to the north of your path to the Council Ruin. With all the bluehook birds flying about in their huge migratory flock it makes seeing anything above the horizon difficult, but still this stands out. Now that you've gotten closer it is clear that it is smoke rising, not dust, and gunfire can be heard echoing over the plains.



If the PCs choose to ignore it they can do so easily enough and simply drive around. If they choose to investigate read the following text aloud:

As you approach the source of the smoke it is apparent trouble lies ahead. A G-3 survey vehicle painted in the blue and grey of the Dawning Star Republic and bearing the logo of the Dawning Star Science Department is on fire, creating the plume of thick, black smoke that attracted your attention. Next to it is an S-15 ground transport also painted blue and gray, several boxes of equipment, and a large piece of what appears to be terraforming equipment nearly twenty feet tall which is now leaking chemicals from a number of bullet holes. Two individuals in Dawning Star Republic terraformer uniforms slump against the vehicles, while two more cower behind boxes, pistols in hand.

On the other side of the terraforming equipment sits a badly beaten and very dirty G-3 and two scout bikes, along with four armed and scruffy looking individuals who are taking occasional shots at the terraformers while they try to loop around and flank them. It seems like it's a bad day to be a terraformer.

The Patterson Four tried to simply hold up the terraformers and take their fill of chemicals and portable terraforming equipment, but the terraformers were feeling particularly brave today and fought back. Now two terraformers are disabled and the other two are hiding while the bandits move in for the kill. The Patterson Four are mainly concerned about making a profit and so only attack the terraformers as long as they put up a fight. Currently they are moving toward the S-15 transport in the hopes of securing whatever supplies it holds since the terraformers' G-3 is on fire due to a stray bullet into a chemical vat.

If the PCs drive their vehicle right up into the fight, the Patterson Four will open fire on them immediately, thinking them the biggest threat. If the PCs ditch their vehicle and approach on foot they will likely be unnoticed by the bandits until they are within 30 feet of the conflict. If the PCs look sufficiently threatening, when they make their presence known the Patterson Four will immediately move back toward their vehicles to flee. No amount of profit is worth getting killed over. Once the Patterson Four start taking damage from the PCs, regardless of how threatening they appear, they will begin turning tail.

The terraformers' G-3 is ruined and on fire and will explode three minutes after the PCs arrive, inflicting 5d6 damage on everything within 15 feet. On the round before it explodes a number of small explosions occur, providing warning that it's about to go up.

The injured terraformers are both disabled at -2 hit points when the PCs arrive, meaning they only have a few rounds to save them. The two conscious terraformers will assist the PCs in chasing off the Patterson Four, but their first concern is their comrades and the atmospheric converter. The atmospheric converter was operational when it took several hits and is now unstable, meaning it will explode in a few minutes if it is not shut down. This takes a Terraforming check (DC 15) and a Computer Use check (DC 20), each of which takes one minute to complete. If the atmospheric converter is not shut down within ten minutes of the PCs arriving on the scene it explodes, inflicting 10d6 fire damage on everything within fifty feet.

Assuming they live, the terraformers will be very grateful to the PCs for their assistance and try to assist them by tending their wounds, repairing any vehicles, and sharing their supplies. If the PCs try to rob the terraformers they will acquiesce, having no stomach for another fight.

The Patterson Four will flee if the battle turns against them in the slightest, shooting out the tires and splitting up in order to avoid pursuit. If cornered they will surrender, though may try to escape later. These bandits are far more concerned about money and living than dying foolishly. While the Patterson Four claim to be widely known and dangerous desperadoes, they are really small change in the criminal world.

Twenty minutes after the PCs arrive Ranger Reyes and her patrol arrive, taking any bandits still alive into custody. Assuming the PCs intervened on behalf of the terraformers and did not try to rob them, Ranger Reyes writes them a permit for going into the Council Ruin; while this does not fall under her jurisdiction no one in the area is going to have the guts to question it. There is a minor reward out for the Patterson Four, which will grant the PCs a +1 increase to their Wealth bonus, and Ranger



Reyes will make sure they get credit for capturing them. She also lets the PCs take their pick of any of the equipment the bandits had, though the bandit vehicles have all suffered 10 points of damage and Repair checks made to fix them suffer a -4 penalty due to their poor condition.

◆ NPCs

The Patterson Four

While the Patterson Four claim to all be brothers, not all are in fact related. There are two Pattersons in the group but they are cousins, and the other two have no familial relation to the others. They just thought they would sound more dangerous if they claimed to be brothers, since the vengeance of a man against his brother's killer is a terrible thing. Michael, Russ, Saleem, and Hwuang do not even look related, but with their hats on and rough-out collars buttoned up it is much less noticeable. They have thus far limited their activities to cattle rustling and a few holdups, but this encounter is the first time they've run into someone who actually fights back. While the Patterson Four are pretty good cattle rustlers and thieves, their combat skills are lacking. Once they meet real opposition they will turn tail and run, or surrender if they cannot flee.

Michael and Russ Patterson (Tough Ord. 4) ◆ CR 3

Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 4d10+8; hp 30; MAS 15; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 17, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+3 class, +1 Dex, +3 armor); BAB +3; Grap +5; Atk +5 melee (1d4+2, survival knife), +4 ranged (2d10, Brase shotgun); Full +5 melee (1d4+2, survival knife), +4 ranged (2d10, Brase shotgun); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ; AL Patterson Four; SV Fort +4,



Ref +2, Will +2; AP 0; Rep +1; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Criminal

Skills: Drive +5, Gamble +3, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (Streetwise) +1, Read/Write Language (English), Speak Language (English).

Talents: None

Feats: Armor Proficiency (Light), Confident, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Surface Vehicle Operation (Trucks).

Possessions: Rough-outs, Brase shotgun with 22 rounds, survival gear, 3 days of rations, compass, survival knife, watch

Saleem Patterson

(Fast Ord. 4) ♦ CR 3

Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 4d6+8; hp 22; MAS 14; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 20, touch 17, flat-footed 18 (+5 class, +2 Dex, +3 armor); BAB +3; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (1d8+1, whipstick), +5 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 Auto Pistol); Full +4 melee (1d8+1, whipstick), +5 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 Auto Pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL Patterson Four; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +1; AP 0; Rep +1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Criminal

Skills: Drive +9, Hide +9, Knowledge (Streetwise) +8, Move Silently +9, Profession (Criminal) +7, Read/Write Language (English), Ride +9, Speak Language (English).

Talents: None

Feats: Armor Proficiency (Light), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons

Proficiency, Surface Vehicle Operation (Motorcycle, Trucks).

Possessions: Rough-outs, EDF-9 auto pistol with 4 clips, whip stick, fragmentation grenade, sunglasses, compass, lock picks, branding gear.

Hwuang Patterson

(Strong Ord. 4) ♦ CR 3

Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 4d8+8; hp 23; MAS 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 17, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+3 class, +1 Dex, +3 armor); BAB +4; Grap +6; Atk +6 melee (1d10+2, durasteel longsword), +5 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 Auto-Pistol); Full +6 melee (1d10+2, durasteel longsword), +5 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 Auto-Pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ; AL Patterson Four; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Criminal

Skills: Climb +3, Drive +3, Handle Animal +7, Knowledge (Streetwise) +5, Read/Write Language (English), Repair +7, Speak Language (English).

Talents: None

Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Surface Vehicle Operation (Motorcycles).

Possessions: Durasteel longsword, EDF-9 auto-pistol with 3 clips, rough outs, 2 days rations, lighter, cigarettes

Dawning Star Terraformers

These scientists were dispatched the day before to set up a portable atmospheric converter in this

area to offset some strange atmospheric anomalies and weather patterns that had been appearing and expected it to be a simple task that would mainly involve sitting around and monitoring the equipment. They were not prepared for the attack of the Patterson Four, though still tried to fight back to protect all the valuable equipment they were working with. Before they knew what happened two of the terraformers were shot and the remaining two were pinned down. The terraformers really just want to do their job and return to Dawning Star City; they have no interest in ruins, adventures, or gun battles.

Dawning Star Terraformers **(Smart Ord. 4) ♦ CR 3**

Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 4d6; hp 14; MAS 10; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 12, touch 12, flat-footed 11 (+1 class, +1 Dex); BAB +2; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (1d4, tool), +3 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 Auto Pistol); Full +2 melee (1d4, tool), +3 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 Auto Pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ; AL Patterson Four; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +4; AP 0; Rep +2; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 11.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Terraformer

Skills: Computer Use +9, Craft (Chemical) +9, Craft (Electrical) +9, Craft (Mechanical) +9, Disable Device +9, Drive +4, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +11, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) +9, Knowledge (Technology) +9, Terraforming +11, Repair +9, Research +9, Search +3.

Talents: None

Feats: Personal Firearms Proficiency, Surface Vehicle Operation (Trucks), Terraforming Training

Possessions: EDF-9 auto pistol with 2 clips, uniform, info-comp.

♦ MIGRATION PERIOD

If the PCs have access to an aircraft they can choose to bypass many of the encounters in this chapter by simply flying over them. If the GM feels this is too easy, use this encounter to complicate their trip. As mentioned in the earlier encounters, the bluehook birds, a ubiquitous scavenger and fishing bird that travels from northern to southern Dawnhome over the course of a year, is in its migratory period currently. This can make air travel very hazardous as the creatures suffer from a strong mob mentality when migrating, following their fellows regardless of the danger presented. A handful of air vehicles have been lost over the years to bluehook migrations, mainly to the birds clogging the air intakes on vectored thrust vehicles. In this encounter the PCs encounter a swarm of bluehook birds that envelop their vehicle.

Read the following text aloud:

While you have been flying over green grasses for the last few hours, the ground cover recently changed to blue rather suddenly, but this was of little concern as there are many plants on Eos that have such a hue. Then the ground cover began to move. Seconds ago it seemed like the entire surface of the world was leaping to flight as what must be millions of bluehook birds took to the sky, flying towards the clouds in one huge chaotic mass.

Unfortunately it seems this cloud of feathers and muscle will envelop your vehicle in scant few seconds.

Unless the characters are traveling at supersonic speeds or above five thousand feet they will not be able to avoid the bluehook flock without great difficulty. They may out climb the bluehook flock if they can achieve an altitude of five thousand feet, but doing this before the vehicle is enveloped this will require a Pilot check (DC 10+ 5 for every 1,000 feet below 5,000). If this check succeeds the vehicle climbs above the flock and may avoid it without further difficulty. Failure means the vehicle does not escape the flock, and failure by more than five points means the vehicle has stalled and begins falling 400 ft. per round until the pilot regains control with a Pilot check (DC 20) or the vehicle hits the ground.

If the vehicle is enveloped by the bluehook flock it must avoid colliding birds for 10,000 feet of distance before it can reach clear air. The time it takes to accomplish this varies with the speed the vehicle is traveling. Each round the pilot must make a Pilot check (DC 15) to avoid hitting birds, with each failed Pilot check inflict 3d6 damage on the vehicle and inflicting a -1 penalty on future Pilot checks to avoid the flock. If the vehicle successfully travels 10,000 feet it passes through the densest part of the flock and may then fly normally.

Alternately the pilot may attempt to land, which will require flying through the flock until the vehicle reaches the ground, as detailed in the paragraph above. Once the pilot reaches the ground he must succeed in a Pilot check (DC 20) to land the vehicle under such unusual conditions. Failure inflicts 4d6 points of damage on the vehicle, while failure by more than five points causes the vehicle to crash, suffering 10d6 damage. If the vehicle crashes its crew take 4d6 damage and may make a Reflex save (DC 16) for half damage. If their vehicle is destroyed, the PCs had better start walking if they want to reach the Council Ruin. Running the Terraformers in Distress encounter next may be a good idea if the PCs lose their primary form of

transportation, since they can appropriate the vehicles of the Patterson Four assuming they are successful in the encounter.

CHAPTER 3: GETTING IN • • •

Now that they are at the Council Ruin, the PCs must find a way to get inside, possibly while avoiding the Dawning Star Republic scientists who are investigating some areas of the ruin. This chapter is where the meat of the adventure begins.

♦ ENCOUNTER 1 Arrival

Read the following text aloud to the PCs as they approach the Council Ruin.

It's been visible on the horizon for the last thirty miles, but not until you came within a few miles of it did its size become truly apparent. What at first was a gray indistinct bump has come into focus as a massive structure ten miles across and reaching over fifteen hundred feet into the air. More like a mountain than a building, it stands out against the stark, flat plains that surround it. Made of an unknown gray material that looks like ceramic, it has weathered the years surprisingly well other than a few cracks and holes in its walls that seem to have been caused by weaponry rather than nature. The remains of other buildings surround the massive dome, but their rubble only serves to heighten the sense of immensity that the structure conveys. It is said that the Dawning Star itself could have fit inside the Council Ruin, and that looks to be true.

There seem to be a few doorways into the structure on the ground level, but all of them are closed. There are a handful of holes and cracks in its walls, some of which seem large enough to admit a person, but many of the openings on this side are swarming by dark specks that are probably archaeologists and scientists from the Dawning Star Republic. They seem to have all the best entrances staked out.

If the PCs are working for the Republic or have a permit to enter the Council Ruins they may sim-

ply approach the archaeologists. Otherwise, they will likely have to sneak around to the other side of the Council Ruin so they can enter without being seen. If the PCs approach the archaeologists go to encounter 2a. If they try to sneak in go to encounter 2b.

♦ ENCOUNTER 2a In the Company of Friends

If the PCs have a permit to access the ruins they can waltz right up to the archaeologists working nearby and introduce themselves, ask them about the ruins, etc. If the PCs approach the archaeologists' positions read the following text aloud.

As the dark specks working in front of the Council Ruin grow larger it is clear that the archaeologists working at the Council Ruin have set up quite an operation. A number of portable buildings, complete with generators and outdoor lights, are contained in a small fenced in compound, along with a number of tents and piles of gear. Several G-3 vehicles are present in the compound, which is located about six hundred feet from the Council Ruin. Several archaeologists scurry among the outer area of the ruins carrying rubble, examining artifacts, and working with a number of scanning devices. All are armed, and the four heavy machine guns mounted on the corners of the compound speak to their level of preparedness to defend themselves.

As you approach a rail-thin man comes jogging out of the compound followed by two EDF soldiers carrying EDF-15s. He waves excitedly towards you, yelling as soon as he gets in range. "Welcome to Dirt digger Town! I'm Dr. Burkett, and I'm in charge. We don't get many visitors around here, or at least civil visitors." He stops a short distance away, hand resting on an EDF-9 auto pistol on his hip. "So what bring you all the way out here?"

If the PCs have a permit to be at the Council Ruin, Dr. Burkett will welcome them with open arms, allowing them to enter the compound and use the facilities he and his people have, in addition to answering any questions they may have. The archaeologists don't get a lot of visitors out here,

and so welcome the human contact. The EDF soldiers are a bit more reserved, as bandits have tried to earn the trust of the archaeologists using similar tactics before, though it has not occurred often. The archaeologists offer to guide the PCs through the ruin if requested, eventually showing them a path that will allow them to reach their destination quicker (see ENCOUNTER 3).

If the PCs do not have a permit, the Dr. Burkett and the EDF soldiers will train their guns on them and give them ten seconds to explain themselves. The archaeologists have had problems with relic hunters trying to steal artifacts from the compound after the archaeologists did all the work of recovering them, and thus are paranoid of anyone without a permit. Unless the PCs concoct a cunning story involving imminent physical danger they will be turned back by Dr. Burkett, who will summon help over the radio if the PCs do not seem willing to leave. The archaeologists are not interested in starting a fight, but will certainly end any that start. PCs that attack the archaeologists will not be pursued beyond the compound, but the archaeologists will call Ranger Reyes and alert her to the situation so she can come deal with them. If the PCs are captured they will be held until Ranger Reyes can collect them and render judgment upon them.

See APPENDIX B for more information on Dirtigger Town.

♦ THE ARCHAEOLOGISTS

Getting to study at Dirtigger Town is considered one of the best assignments an archaeologist in the Dawning Star Republic can get. While no world-changing discoveries have come out of the compound yet and only a limited number of relics have been found, the scientific community believes there is a great deal of history just waiting to be found in the Council Ruin. The archaeologists at Dirtigger Town are all well trained in their field, and while they have little interest in combat, they underwent militia training before leaving Dawning Star City. They try to avoid combat when possible, preferring to follow the lead of the EDF soldiers, but are more than willing to throw down when pressed.

Dirtigger Town is under the direction of Dr. Alan Burkett, who is the resident who has been at the compound the longest. Acting at the direction of the Department of Science, Dr. Burkett has been acting as the head of the compound for a little over two years and is well regarded among the archaeologists and the soldiers. His first concern is always the safety of his people, and he usually defers to the soldiers when it comes to military matters. Dr. Burkett is well known in the scientific community of Eos for his groundbreaking work attempting to reconstruct the social structure of ancient Eos, though his assignment to such a remote location limits the exposure of his more recent work.

The archaeologists are more than willing to help visitors with permits, giving them full run of the compound, though visitors found poking around the armory will quickly find themselves under constant surveillance by the EDF soldiers. Others who approach the compound will be turned away unless they are in dire need of assistance and seem to pose no threat.

♦ WHAT THE ARCHAEOLOGISTS KNOW

The archaeologists have spent ten years now exploring the Council Ruins and have some progress to show for their work. If the PCs think to ask, they are more than willing to give a quick overview of their findings to the PCs, assuming the PCs have a permit. If they do not, the archaeologists will not share this information since the PCs are obviously not approved to be privy to it.

Between talking to the velin and their study of the Council Ruin the archaeologists have come to the conclusion that the Council Ruin once served as a center of government for an interplanetary nation, probably the same group that built the gateway stations that brought the Dawning Star to Eos. This nation was made up of several different species, and chunks of text written in Unispeak, which a few of the scientists of the Republic have learned from the tentaari, have led the archaeologists to believe that the tentaari were one of the member races of this interplanetary nation. Why the tentaari are reluctant to talk about this star nation and their history is unknown. The Council Ruin is believed to have been attacked at some point, but the limited damage has led the archaeologists to believe that the battle was to gain control of the Council Ruin rather than to destroy it. They have come to the tentative conclusion that the Council Ruin was destroyed in some manner of civil war. They believe that after the civil war the center of government was moved elsewhere, leaving the Council Ruin in its current state and changing Eos from a capital world to a backwater planet. They have suspicions about the physical nature of the races that made up the interplanetary nation, but nothing they feel confident enough in to share. They suspect that the Council Ruin was once filled with such wonders as anti-gravity elevators, hand held fusion reactors, nanite devices, and force field devices, but thus far few such wondrous machines have been found.

The archaeologists have found none of the systems built into the Council Ruin to be functional, but have limited their search so far to the levels closest to ground level. They have not explored more than ten floors up or down from ground level, so they have little information to share with the PCs about the lowest level of the structure.

◆ GETTING INSIDE

The archaeologists offer to help the PCs reach their destination within the Council Ruin using their limited maps of the structure. The route they suggest uses a number of elevator shafts to reach what they believe is the bottom of the structure, and they have plenty of duracable to loan the PCs if they are worried about running out. They also have spare glow lamps and other exploration equipment. If the PCs accept the help of the archaeologists it will save them some time in finding their destination (see ENCOUNTER 3).

◆ ENCOUNTER 2b SNEAKING IN

If the PCs do not have a permit they will want to avoid the archaeologist compound and try to get into the ruins without being seen. This is quite easy as the Council Ruin is massive and the archaeologists usually stay relatively close to Dirdigger Town in case of xenomorph attack. The PCs can simply drive around the edge of the Council Ruin until they find a suitably sized crack to crawl through. There are no holes big enough to drive their vehicle through on the ground level of the Council Ruin, as all its doors have long ago been locked and rusted shut.

Read the following text aloud to the PCs as they search for a way in:

The Council Ruin is in surprisingly good repair given its obviously immense age, though the buildings that once surrounded it have not fared so well and create a field of rubble reaching for hundreds of yards out from the Council Ruin itself. There are many obvious doors in the sides of the structure, all of which are closed and look just as sturdy as the walls themselves. You finally find a way inside about three miles from where the archaeologists are camped, in the form of a massive hole blown in the side of the Council Ruin in some battle long past. The hole is fifteen feet across and begins three feet above the ground, making passing through it easy. Beyond it lie the dark, quiet corridors of the Council Ruin.

The hole was blown by a vaasi maser cannon long ago and its sides are melted smooth, indicative of the immense temperatures that were present in its creation. The characters can enter the Council Ruin without difficulty, but unless they take pains to

hide their transportation the archaeologists and the Black Wheel Gang will both notice it. The Black Wheel Gang will follow the PCs in; during their second hour of traveling through the Council Ruin in the next encounter they will meet up with the Black Wheel Gang (see ENCOUNTER 3), while the archaeologists will simply camp out by the vehicle and wait for the PCs to return (which will not happen if all goes according to plan). Attempts to camouflage the vehicle as simple a covering it in grass or throwing camouflage netting are enough to avoid the notice of both groups. The hole is not low enough to the ground or wide enough at its base to accommodate the G-3 survey vehicle inside the ruins, though motorcycles could be hidden inside.

◆ ENCOUNTER 3 Heading Down

Once the PCs enter the Council Ruin, finding their way to their destination is largely a matter of trial and error as they have no complete map of the structure, and it is the size of a large city. PCs who get help from the archaeologists find their trip much easier and only have to resort to guesswork in the last fourth of their journey. It should be made clear to the PCs that while they may make a map of their travels or mark their passage on the walls of the structure with chalk or other means, the Council Ruin is so large, dark, and repetitive that navigating it with any certainty is nigh impossible.

The inside of the Council Ruin is pitch black, requiring some sort of light source to see anything, even with low-light vision. The interior walls have not weathered the years as well as the exterior walls, and many of them are collapsed, creating dangerously unstable areas that may collapse with the slightest provocation. The interior walls have a hardness of 30 and 30 hit points per inch of thickness; they are generally one foot thick. Most of the interior doors are closed and can only be opened by force; nearly all systems in the Council Ruin have failed, and a Strength check (DC 40) is required to force a door. Passages in the Council Ruin are generally 20 feet wide and all ceilings are 20 feet tall as well. The doors are constructed to allow creatures of Large size to pass without difficulty.

The air in the lower levels is particularly dank, and the humidity throughout the structure is uncomfortably high. It is filled with various small creatures, such as the Eotian versions of rats and cockroaches, which are continually scurrying about, making it difficult to detect more dangerous creatures like spitter spiders by sound alone. Much of the Council Ruins smells rather unpleasant from all the animals living in close quarters. Moss, mushrooms, and other subterranean plants are common throughout, some of which are edible and even sought by the velin for their ability to grant visions.

To reach their destination at the bottom of the Council Ruin the PCs must succeed in four Navigate checks (DC 25) with each check taking one hour to make. PCs who receive assistance from the archaeologists automatically pass the first three Navigate checks and thus only need to succeed at one, though their voyage still takes at least four hours. If the PCs somehow lost their copy of the map and are navigating from memory they suffer a -4 penalty to these Navigate skill checks.

For each hour the PCs spend wandering around the Council Ruin roll 1d20 and consult the following table to see if they run into anything unusual. The encounters are further described below.

1d20 Roll	Encounter
1-12	No encounter
13-14	Black Wheel Gang Meeting*
15-16	Spitter Spider Party
17	Security System
18	Unstable Area
19	Vaasi Warhounds
20	Relic?*

* This encounter can only occur once. Multiple rolls of this encounter should be rerolled. If the PCs entered through the hole in ENCOUNTER 2b and did not conceal their vehicle they automatically encounter the Black Wheel Gang during their second hour in the Council Ruin.

◆ ENCOUNTER 3a Black Wheel Gang Meeting

Assuming they are not all dead, the Black Wheel Gang has followed the PCs into the ruins and is now wandering around trying to find their way, having less luck than the PCs. If this encounter comes up the Black Wheel Gang has ended up in the same area as the PCs, and they both find the same power generator station at the same time. If the PCs did not camouflage their vehicle outside this encounter occurs on the second hour of their wanderings.

Read the following text aloud:

As you proceed through the darkness of the Council Ruin you come upon an oddity: a door halfway open. The door obviously suffered serious damage at some time in the past, appearing to have been blown open. On the other side is a large spherical chamber, its walls coated in dull metallic plating. A walkway runs through the center

of the room connecting the doorway you just came through to a similar doorway on the opposite side. Floating in center of the spherical room is an oddly egg-shaped device about the size of a small car that glows softly, obviously still having some manner of power. The device is a cluster of tubes, controls, and readouts that has no easily discernible purpose. The entire room shows signs of battle and device itself is damaged in several places. As you inspect it from afar you notice the door on the opposite side of the room is open, and through this door step several humans, all with weapons drawn.

If the PCs encountered the Black Wheel Gang previously they can make a Spot check (DC 10) to recognize them. Stafford tells the PCs to leave and gives them one round to do so before opening fire, wishing to claim the device for himself. If the PCs leave the room at any time, the Black Wheel Gang does not follow. If any of the Black Wheel Gang is reduced to half hit points they retreat, tossing a fragmentation grenade into the room behind them.

The walls of the room are made of a metal that redirects all energy that contacts it back into the room, including the kinetic energy of bullets. Any time a firearm or energy weapon is fired within the spherical room and the attack misses the target it has a 10% chance to ricochet into another target. Roll 1d20: on a roll of 1-5 one of the PCs is hit; on a roll of 6-10 one of the Black Wheel Gang is hit; on a roll of 11-20 the device is hit and begins to destabilize. If any explosives are used near the device, such as the fragmentation grenades that the Black Wheel Gang carries, the device begins to destabilize. The device is a generator and any damage sends it into overload. Five rounds after it is struck it will explode, inflicting 5d6 fire damage on everything in the room, with a Reflex save (DC 18) for half damage. In the rounds between being hit and exploding the device glows brightly, begins smoking, and starts repeating evacuation orders in Unispeak.

After the explosion the whole area is destabilized and begins collapsing. The hall the PCs entered the spherical room from begins collapsing, starting in the direction they came from and moving toward the direction they are headed, effectively sealing off the way they came. The collapsing ceiling begins 50 feet behind the PCs and moves at 30 feet per round down the hallway for a distance of 120 feet. As long as the PCs move away from the collapsing ceiling with all possible speed they can escape without

damage, but PCs caught in the collapsing area must make a Reflex check (DC 13) or take 2d6 damage each round they are in the collapsing area.

Assuming the PCs escape they have to find another way out because the path they took on the way in is well and truly blocked.

◆ ENCOUNTER 3b A Clutter of Spitter Spiders

Spitter spiders are ubiquitous in the Council Ruin in all areas except those protected by active security systems. Wandering into areas they use for hunting is relatively easy given the dark and maze-like nature of the Council Ruin. This encounter can occur multiple times so changes to the tactics of the spitter spiders and the boxed text below is probably a good idea.

Read the following text aloud:

Since you've entered the Council Ruin, the scuttling noises of small animals have been high constant as the ruins seem to be inhabited by a legion of rodent-like creatures. As you progress down a hallway towards your destination you all suddenly hear an animal crying in fear, followed by a hiss and a wet chomping noise that silences the cry of pain. All the other animal noises are gone now, and it is evident that the cause is nearby.

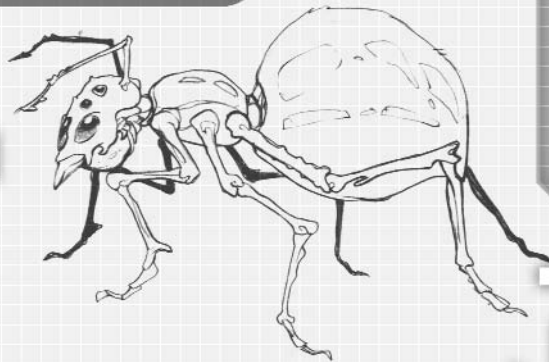
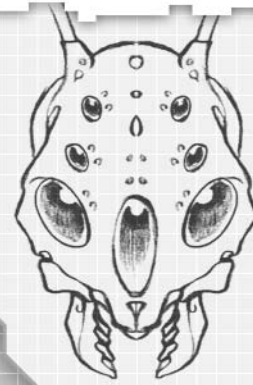
The PCs have unwittingly walked into an area where a pack of spitter spiders have erected their webs. The PCs have managed to walk halfway into the spitter spider hunting ground before its existence became apparent, and now they are effectively surrounded. If the GM feels this is too arbitrary a set up, he could allow the PCs a Survival or Spot check (DC 20) to notice the signs of spitter spider habitation, allowing the PCs to avoid the area.

Once the PCs are in the area, eight spitter spiders swarm at them from the surrounding rooms in the hopes of chasing the PCs into one of their webs. They will attack the PCs in an attempt to force them to back up into a "web" (marked on the map), giving no thought to their own casualties or wounds. If the PCs do not leave the area within 10 rounds, six more spitter spiders will arrive to investigate all the noise.

If any PCs enter a 5 foot square with a spitter spider web, they must make a Balance check (DC 15) to avoid falling prone. Characters who fall prone take 1d4 points of damage due to the many metal spikes the spitter spiders place in their webs.

If the PCs investigate the webs of the spitter spiders they find the remains of some relic hunters who

A small, insectoid creature common in the deepest shadows of the Eolian Ruins, the spitter spider is actually a six-limbed beast more similar to an ant than a spider. The spitter spider is able to produce a powerful acidic substance from a gland below its mandibles that it can expel a short distance, bringing down its prey and aiding in the digestive process. This acid is also used to weaken rocks, trees, and metal to create latticed shelters that look like webs.



were previous victims. While most of their equipment has been destroyed by the spitter spider acid, a GP-02 gyro-jet pistol with 3 rounds of ammunition can be found with a Search check (DC 20).

◆ NPCs Spitter Spider ◆ CR 1

Small Vermin; HD 2d8; hp 9; Mas 11; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 16, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +4 natural); BAB +1; Grap -4; Atk +1 melee (1d4-1, bite), +3 ranged touch (1d6 acid, spittle); Full Atk +1 melee (1d4-1, bite), +3 ranged touch (1d6 acid, spittle); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ acid spittle, immune to mind affecting effects, prodigious leap, resistance to massive damage, tremorsense; AL none; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 11, Int -, Wis 13, Cha 5. **Skills:** Hide +14, Jump +6, Move Silently +10, Spot +4.

Feats: None.

Advancement: 3-4 HD (Large), 5-8 HD (Medium).

◆ ENCOUNTER 3c Security Systems

Almost all of the security systems in the Council Ruin have failed due to damage or power loss, but a scant few remain. These were originally mostly nonlethal devices designed to protect governmental employees and information against Star Confederation citizens who may have wished to cause trouble, but as the invasion loomed many of these systems were upgraded to lethal systems in the eventuality that the Council Dome was penetrated. The archaeologists rarely encounter them since they stick mainly to the more commonly traveled areas near ground level. Now the PCs have to deal with one of the remaining security devices. The PCs may have this encounter multiple times, so changes in the specifics of the trap are probably a good idea.

Read the following text aloud:

Just ahead of you there is a section of floor that is unusually clean with no rubble or animal droppings present. The only thing on the floor is carcass of some rodent-like creature that seems to have been cut in half, only a pile of dust lying where its upper body should be. Similar piles of dust lay around the cleared area. A small metallic bubble is visible in the ceiling, but its purpose is not easy to tell from this distance.

This trap consists of a concealed disintegrator rifle attached to a gravity sensor, a device that senses movement by detecting the minute changes in gravity caused by the approach of objects with mass, seeing through all types of cloaking shields or stealth technology. In the hallway the PCs are in currently there is a 20 foot by 20 foot area that the gravity sensor works within, denoted by the clean area where everything within it has been blasted into dust by the disintegrator rifle. Anything that steps in the affected area is attacked by the disintegrator rifle, which has a +8 attack bonus and inflicts 6d12 damage, Reflex save (DC 16) for half damage. The cannon fires on any target to enter the trapped area repeatedly until the target leaves, is destroyed, or the disintegrator rifle runs out of power. It currently has enough power for 7 shots.

Both the disintegrator rifle and the gravity sensor are built into a small metallic bubble in the middle of the trap area, making disabling the trap extremely difficult to do without setting it off. Disabling this trap requires a Disable Device check (DC 30) and the character making the check will probably suffer

from progress level penalties since it is a Progress Level 9 trap. The metallic bubble that houses the gravity sensor and disintegrator rifle has a hardness of 40 and 20 hit points.

If the PCs disable the trap they may try to remove the gravity sensor and disintegrator rifle, requiring a Repair check (DC 15) to do so without damaging them. While neither device is currently useable separately due to a lack of a means to display information for the gravity sensor and a lack of fire control for the disintegrator rifle, they may both be modified later to be useable or sold as relics.

Clever PCs may bypass the trap by throwing inanimate objects into the detection field until the disintegrator charges are expended. Alternatively, the PCs may backtrack and try to find another path, adding an additional hour of exploration and another roll on the encounter table.

See APPENDIX D for more information on the gravity sensor and disintegrator rifle.

◆ Encounter 3d Unstable Area

There are many regions of the Council Ruin that are unstable due to damage and structural fatigue. As the PCs wander through the ruins they encounter one of these areas, and must be careful to navigate it successfully.

Read the following text aloud:

The walls of the hallway you are walking along have fallen away from each other ahead, allowing the ceiling to bow and droop. Cracks run throughout all the walls and ceilings ahead, and little bits of dust and rubble fall from the ceiling with every footstep. Obviously the section ahead is unstable and in danger of collapsing. You can try to go around, but it will probably take longer to find another path than to risk this section.

If the PCs choose to go around, they must make an additional Navigate check to reach their destination, meaning at least another hour of wandering.

If they trudge forward, each PC must make a Balance check (DC 10) each round to avoid causing a cave in. For each failed check all the characters must make a Reflex save (DC 11) or take 1d6 points of damage from falling debris. If a Balance check is failed by 5 or more points a larger collapse is triggered, inflicting 4d6 points of damage on all the characters, Reflex save (DC 12) for half damage. If one of the characters tries to inspect the unstable area with a Craft (Structural) check (DC

10) he can find the strongest points and point them out, granting a +2 competence bonus to Balance checks made to navigate the unstable area. The unstable region is 60 feet long.

◆ ENCOUNTER 3e Vaasi Warhounds

The vaasi hiding in the remains of the Council Ruin mainly keep to the lower levels, except for their nighttime forays outside of the ruins, but they allow the warhounds they keep to roam the ruins as they wish. Most of the time the warhounds spend their days hunting spitter spiders and other creatures, but they are always on the lookout for something that provides more sport. They have been responsible for a number of archaeologists and relic hunters that have gone missing, as the vaasi warhounds consider humans to be very entertaining prey. Several of the archaeologists have survived warhound attacks, and while their reports have not been thoroughly investigated they are one of the main reasons the archaeologists do not venture into the Council Ruin's lower levels or enter the structure at all after dark.

Read the following text aloud:

As your trek through the dark and seemingly endless tunnels of the Council Ruin continues, you begin to hear the sound of what seem to be footfalls coming towards you, but their cadence is not that of a person. It takes a few seconds to recognize them, but you then realize it sounds like a herd of animals, and that is when the hissing starts. A mixture of what sounds like a crackling growl and a hiss can just be heard over the rising sound of running animals, just as the source of the sound rounds a corner ahead. Three six-legged creatures come into view, all covered in black plates and having extremely sinister features. From their mouths massive fangs jut and thick saliva drips, making them appear as devil dogs in the shadow-filled corridor of the Council Ruins. They lower their heads and prepare to charge, looking to make you their next meal.

These three vaasi warhounds scented the PCs traveling through the Council Ruin and have decided to make a meal of them. The warhounds will charge the PCs and fight until the death. If the vaasi

menace has remained a secret in your campaign, this may well be their first encounter with the vaasi, which do not seem to be related to any other creature seen thus far on Eos. The carcasses would doubtlessly be valuable to a xenobiologist if the PCs could get them out of the Council Ruin, but the warhounds each weigh around 100 pounds, making transporting them difficult. Confirmation of the existence of darklings may be an important event for the PCs, but in light of what is to come it is not that earth shattering. If the PCs have encountered vaasi before, warhounds are probably old hat.

◆ NPCs Vaasi Warhound ◆ CR 3

Small aberration; HD 3d8+6; hp 19; MAS 17; Init +7; Spd 40 ft.; Defense 19, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dex, +5 natural, +1 size); BAB +2; Grap -1; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, bite); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ; blindsight 60 ft., improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, vaasi servitor; AL vaasi; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +5; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 5, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills: Hide +7, Jump +9, Listen +3, Move Silently +9.

Feats: Improved Initiative.

Advancement: 4-9 HD (Medium).

◆ ENCOUNTER 3f Relic?

While few relics have been found by the archaeologists working around the Council Ruin, that does not mean they are not present. The archaeologists and relic hunters that enter the Council Ruin tend to search the same areas, with few going deep into the bowels of the Council Ruin as the PCs are. If the GM does not want the PCs getting their hands on a relic, he should skip this encounter and roll a different encounter from the chart in ENCOUNTER 3.

On the other hand, if the PCs have taken a lot of damage during the adventure, the GM may want to add a second device.

Read the following text aloud:

One rubble-strewn passageway is starting to look like all the others in the depths of the Council Ruin, but then some glinting reflective metal on the floor catches your eye. A small section of metal juts out from a pile of rubble, and the metal is remarkable shiny compared to the other materials you have seen through your trip in the Council Ruin.

Removing the rubble from the object requires a Strength check (DC 12), and a successful check reveals a silvery-metallic device that looks like a cross between a splint and a harness. This device is a nanite emergency medical kit once common in the Star Confederation medical service, and is capable of amazing feats of healing in very short periods of time. The device's silvery surface is due to the millions of nanites that cover it, all of which are currently dormant and are locked to the nanite med-kit's surface. When the harness is placed on a living being and activated the nanites spread across the target and heal any injuries found. See APPENDIX D for more information on the nanite emergency medical kit.

◆ ENCOUNTER 4 The Threshold to History

Finished with their wanderings through the Council Ruin, the PCs reach the area they are looking for. The PCs have reached the periphery of the last security perimeter guarding the artificial singularity, but this also puts them deep into vaasi territory. Read the following text aloud to the PCs:

The hallways you are in currently seem to be some of the lowest so far, if not the lowest in the Council Ruin. The air is cool and motionless, with noises echoing from what may be the next corridor or halfway across the structure. You have passed several large security doors, broken weapon emplacements, and other security devices in the last few minutes that seem to have been disabled or destroyed long ago. Whatever is down here, someone didn't want anyone getting to it.

For the first time in hours there is a light source other than yours up ahead. As you come to an intersection of four tunnels, you see a number of banks of blindingly bright lights to your right. After your eyes adjust you can see what appear to be several automated weapon systems activate near the lights. A number of impressive looking weapons held by robotic armatures pop out of the walls. You then hear a hissing sound coming from behind you, from the corridor to your left, and from the corridor directly ahead. Down these other corridors you can see dark, sinister shapes moving just out of the light. As you consid-

er your options the automated security systems opens fire, blasting the creatures that are down the tunnel to your left.

The PCs are caught in a four way intersection with vaasi down three of the corridors, including behind them, and the security systems protecting the artificial singularity ahead of them. All the corridors are 20 feet wide and the vaasi begin 60 feet down each corridor from the intersection. The automated guns are 40 feet from the intersection.

The vaasi will try to attack the PCs, while the security systems will attack the vaasi, leaving the PCs alone. If the PCs remain in the corridor they are likely to eventually be overwhelmed by the vaasi, since the security systems cannot shoot down the side passages, but if they run for cover behind the security systems they will be safe. If the PCs do not figure this out, Watchman 3 from the next encounter may appear in hologram form behind the security systems and attempt to get them to come into his chambers for safety. The bright lights in Watchman 3's chamber that are illuminating the passages beyond are bright enough to activate the Light Sensitivity species trait of the vaasi in the region around the intersection.

◆ THE LAST BASTION

This is the heart of the security system for the Council Ruin and while the vaasi have managed to disable most of the security systems in the region over the years, these last automated guns and a few other devices remain. There are six automated disintegrator rifles held by robotic arms built into the sides of the passage ahead, all of which have a +12 attack bonus and 295 shots in their shared energy bank. Each automated gun has a Defense of 22 (+10 armor, +2 Dex), a hardness of 30, and 20 hit points. There were once a number of plasma sprayers, grenade launchers, and other weapons, but these have run out of ammunition or been destroyed. The disintegrator rifles attack any vaasi that comes into their gravity sensor range, which is 100 ft. Normally, Watchman 3 only keeps one of these weapons online at a time to save power.

Behind the guns is a force field barrier sealing off Watchman 3's control room and the storage room for the artificial singularity. This force field effectively has a hardness of 50, making it unlikely that anything will penetrate it, but only has power for another hour of operation. Watchman 3 will lower the force field to allow the PCs to enter the room.

These weapons only fire on vaasi, though they will fire at vaasi behind the PCs, possibly causing concern among the PCs. Once these weapons run out of ammunition they retract into their wall mounts and the vaasi will be able to advance to the force field, which will eventually collapse.

◆ THE VAASI

The vaasi surrounding the PCs are vaasi soldiers who have been directed by one of the true vaasi hiding in the depths of the Council Ruin to keep an eye on the area. One of them has gone back to warn his fellows that some intruders have arrived. The others seek to incapacitate those intruders while avoiding the automated disintegrator rifles. There are two vaasi soldiers down each of the hallways and they will try to run across the field of fire of the disintegrator guns to get the PCs if necessary. The vaasi will fight until they are slain, knowing that to flee will only mean they will end up as their master's dinner. They will not attempt to follow the PCs into Watchman 3's chamber.

Vaasi Soldier ◆ CR 4

Medium aberration; HD 3d8+9; hp 21; MAS 19; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+2 Dex, +5 natural, +2 armor); BAB +2; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (1d6+2/19-20, machete) or +4 ranged (1d10/19-20, crossbow); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+2/19-20, machete) or +4 ranged (1d10/19-20, crossbow); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, vaasi servitor; AL vaasi; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills: Hide +5, Move Silently +5, Spot +3, Survival +4.

Feats: Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Simple Weapon Proficiency.

Equipment: Machete, leather armor, crossbow, 23 bolts.

◆ ENCOUNTER 5

History Lessons

The PCs have now reached the last haven of Watchman 3, the artificial intelligence entity created by the Star Confederation to watch over and protect the artificial singularity. More information on artificial intelligence entities can be found in Appendix C. Watchman 3 is an amazingly complex computer program that mimics the behavior of living beings so effectively it too seems alive. It was created to guard the artificial singularity and to make sure that any who came looking for it know just how dangerous it is. Considering its defenses are on the verge of failing, Watchman 3 is looking for way to get the artificial singularity out of the Council Ruin so the vaasi do not get it. Watchman 3 works from the assumption that anyone getting the artificial singularity would be better than the vaasi getting it.

When the PCs enter Watchman 3's abode, read the following text aloud:

The room beyond the automated weapons is large and circular, though one quarter of the circle seems to have been separated off into another room which can be accessed by a single door. Unlike most of the Council Ruin, this room seems to be in relatively good repair, though dust and debris has accumulated on some of its surfaces. The structure seems very sound and the walls are all white or gray in color, which combined with the strong illumination in the room makes it seem far more inviting than the other places you've been for the last few hours. The lights in the room, most of which are on the ceiling, though some are on the walls, are painfully bright and difficult to look at. They do not seem to be raising the temperature in the room, which is just as cool as the hallway you just left. The floor of this circular room has few piles of debris, metal scraps, and even what seem to be some damaged robots and other devices scattered across it. None of the dust or debris appears to have been disturbed recently and there are no footprints or other signs of activity. The walls are covered in what appear to be computer screens, most of which are not active. Behind you, the doorway you just came through seals over with some sort of translucent energy field as the automated energy guns continue firing occasionally at whatever those creatures are.

Standing in the center of the room is a translucent humanoid figure with its arms hanging down by its side. You can see the walls behind the figure clearly through its body; it seems to be a hologram or other form of projection. The figure has an almost featureless humanoid face, having two eyes, two ears, a nose, and a mouth but little else on its bland gray face. As you watch its features change to what appears to be some sort of weird conglomeration of your group's facial features. The projection begins talking, but it is not a language you are familiar with.

Watchman 3 wishes to communicate to the PCs what the artificial singularity is, why they need to keep it away from the vaasi, how dire the situation is, and how they can escape the predicament they are now in. The language the projection is speaking is Unispeak, the common tongue of the Star Confederation, but unless the PCs speak it they are probably out of luck. Smart Heroes using the Linguist talent must do so against DC 20 to understand Watchman 3, and the Universal Communication Charismatic Hero talent does not help in understanding unknown languages. Watchman 3 has the Linguist talent, which he may use to get certain simple keywords across to the PCs, but the talent does not have the capacity to communicate the complex information he is trying to relate.

If the PCs are able to understand Unispeak, Watchman 3 will simply tell them the history of the artificial singularity and that it must be removed from the Council Ruin so the vaasi do not get it. Watchman 3 does learn quickly and for every minute it spends listening to the PCs he learns one commonly used word in whatever language they are speaking, so that toward the end of their time before the vaasi charge it may be able to communicate basic ideas to them.

More than likely, the PCs will have to play a game of charades with Watchman 3 to learn what it is trying to tell them. Luckily, it has a hologram projector that can display almost anything. After trying spoken language it will quickly resort to using images through its hologram projector.

Read the following text aloud:

After spewing forth a string of sounds that you're pretty sure is a language, the hologram changes its expression to one of exaggerated frustration, and then appears to think for a few seconds. The image then disappears, but in its place appears an image of a star, translucent in the same fashion as the image was. The star seems to be floating in space as the image backs up, but there is no stellar system present. The star then begins to change color and suddenly explodes; in its place a circular black void forms and begins pulling in gases left over from the star, but the void does not seem to move or grow, instead staying perfectly still. It is the truest black you have ever seen.

The void is then grasped by a massive clawed hand. The image pulls back further

to reveal that it is connected to a larger version of one of those creatures outside. The massive, six limbed insectoid creature then builds a tubular device at which the void is placed at one end. This device is then shown floating in space near a star; the star suddenly begins to collapse while the device begins to glow brightly, turning its bulk towards you.

As the device turns, what appears to be part of the star trapped behind energy fields within the device comes into view. Spaceships, all massive black and gray vessels miles in length and covered in all manner of spikes and struts, then dock with the device, and as they do they glow with power as the star fragment grows dim. After a number of ships are powered up thusly, they all leave via a gateway like the one the *Dawning Star* used to reach Eos, only created by the tubular device. The star explodes seconds after they leave, the planetary system around it being burned to cinders in the process. The image suddenly zooms in on one of these worlds and dozens of large cities are evidently spread across its surface, but they are all wiped clean by the dying star's energy.

The image flickers as the automated weapons begin another heavy volley of fire towards the creatures in the hall, which seem to be making a concerted effort to bypass them. Rocks, arrows, and even some bullets fly down the corridor and bounce off the energy field blocking the doorway, which shudders slightly with each hit.

The tubular device returns to the image as it lines up on another star surrounded by a fleet of dark and angular ships. Suddenly a dozens of smaller steel and silver ships exit out of a gateway that forms nearby, swarming the device and eventually towing it through a second gateway before the dark ships are able to stop them. The tubular device is then shown in orbit above a planet that whose surface is

covered in the greens and blues of a living world. The device is cut into smaller pieces, each of which is whisked away by a small ship. The final pieces, an odd machine covered in what look to be radar dishes and a small gray box, are flown down to the planet. While the ship carrying the radar dish goes south, the other ship carries the gray box to what appears to be the Council Ruin.

The image then goes blank for a few seconds, after which the gray box reappears. The lid opens, revealing the void of pure black from before, contained within the box.

Suddenly the room is quiet as the energy weapons in the hall stop firing. As you look over to the entrance to this room all of the guns are retracted into the walls and the creatures are charging down the hall. Within seconds they are beating on the energy field, and with each punch it seems to get weaker. The lights in the room begin to dim.

The humanoid image returns, now more translucent and appearing to grow weaker. It points at the other door in the room that leads into to the walled off portion of the circle. That door opens, and beyond is the gray box from the image sitting on a raised pedestal.

He points again as a secret door that opens in one of the circular wall of the room you are in now, revealing what looks to be a shaft leading up. He points at the box, then at the shaft, and does so repeatedly with increasing speed.

Watchman 3 wants the PCs to grab the box containing the artificial singularity and get the heck out of there before the force field fails. If they don't get the clue he will do more and more complex pantomime efforts to demonstrate what they should do. The force field guarding the chamber only has ten minutes left on it, so the PCs have some time, but if they mess around they should be penalized in later encounters since they have reduced their lead over the vaasi.

When the PCs go to pick up the box containing the artificial singularity, read the following text:

The room that makes up the sealed off quarter of the larger circular chamber is covered in gray wall plating of an unknown material. The only thing that stands out in the room is the raised pedestal the gray box from the images sits on, occupying the center of the room. The box is little more than three feet long, two feet wide, and two feet tall, and has several handholds built into its structure. Text in an unknown language wraps around the pedestal.

The text is Unispeak and is a warning about what is in the box. It says "This box contains an artificial singularity in a dimensional pocket. Use all possible caution." If a character wishes to try and read it using a Decipher Script check (DC 35) he may, but taking long in doing so is going to prompt more silent encouragement from Watchman 3 to get moving.

Assuming the PCs pick up the box and carry it to the shaft, read the following text aloud:

As you enter the main portion of the circular room holding the box, the creatures beating on the energy field that keeps them outside strike the shield with greater force and frequency. The hologram points at the door leading to the shaft up. As you enter the shaft the door closes behind you and the floor begins to glow. Suddenly you all begin to rise up the shaft, but there is no floor beneath you. All of you float up the shaft at what must be hundreds of feet per second, stopping only seconds later with a slight jolt to find yourselves standing on top of the Council Ruin, fifteen hundred feet in the air. Next to you a large panel has opened, revealing what appears to be a launching pad for an aircraft or spaceship. The small white and gray ship you saw bringing the box to the Council Ruin in the image is located here, but it appears to have suffered severe damage at some point in the past and now looks completely nonfunctional. Looks like you might have to get down the hard way.

The PCs are now standing on top of the Council Ruin, having used the emergency escape force

field elevator that was intended to evacuate the artificial singularity in case of attack, but when the final attack came it was decided it was safer where it was. Unfortunately, the escape ship was ransacked by the vaasi during their assault on the Council Ruin, and it is now little more than a junk pile. Luckily for the PCs, the slant of the Council Ruin is very slight until the edge, where getting down will become much more interesting.

◆ NPCs

Watchman 3

An artificial intelligence entity created by the Star Confederation, Watchman 3 was originally designed to oversee the security systems of the Council Dome. As the war continued he was re-assigned specifically to guard the artificial singularity from the vaasi using the security systems within the Council Dome. He was originally assigned a number of service and repair robots to keep the security systems functional, but eventually these robots broke down and the security systems soon followed until only the automated guns and the force field the PCs see remains. The data crystal holding Watchman 3's programming is hidden in the walls of the room he inhabits and difficult to remove, so he cannot be easily shut off.

Watchman 3

(Smart Hero 5/Dedicated Hero 5) ◆ CR 14

Tiny Construct; HD 4d6; hp 14; Mas -; Init +0; Spd -; Defense +5, touch -, flat-footed -; BAB +5; Grap -; Atk -; Full Atk -; FS -; Reach -; SQ Advancement, backup, behavioral controls, data crystal, mental power, non-physical existence, robot upgrades, transmission travel; AL Star Confederation; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +11; AP 7; Rep +1; Str -, Dex -, Con -, Int 28, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Progress Level Familiarity: 9

Skills: Computer Use +24, Craft (Electrical) +15, Craft (Mechanical) +16, Craft (Pharmaceutical) +15, Craft (Structural) +14, Decipher Script +18, Demolitions +18, Forgery +18, Investigate +26, Knowledge (Civics) +16, Knowledge (History) +25, Knowledge (Technology) +26, Knowledge (Tactics) +33, Listen +13, Navigate +16, Read/Write Language (7 of choice plus Unispeak), Repair +21, Research +20, Search +19, Sense Motive +5, Speak Language (7 of choice plus Unispeak), Spot +13, Treat Injury +11.

Talents: Aware, Empathy, Linguist, Savant (Computer Use), Savant (Knowledge (Tactics)). Skill Emphasis (Knowledge (Tactics))

Feats: Alertness, Attentive, Educated, Gearhead, Iron Will, Low Profile, Meticulous, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Studios.

◆ CHAPTER 4: GETTING OUT • • •

The PCs are now on the roof of the Council Ruin and need to get down while carrying the artificial singularity. Once down, they have another run-in with the Black Wheel Gang, but in the middle of their confrontation the vaasi swarm up from below, encouraging the PCs to run for Dirdigger Town. In the compound the PCs and archaeologists prepare for a final showdown against the vaasi now rising up from the Council Ruin.

◆ ENCOUNTER 1

Getting Down

At the end of the last chapter, the PCs were on top of the Council Ruin, fifteen hundred feet above ground and 5 miles from the edge. Next to them is a ruined Star Confederation spacecraft that was meant as an escape vehicle but is now little more than junk. It should be night by this time (assuming the PCs went into the ruins in the morning or afternoon and stayed inside long enough for night to fall).

Read the following text aloud to the PCs:

The view from this height is truly impressive and you suspect you can see at least thirty miles in every direction. Flocks of bluehook birds can be seen taking to wing in the distance, looking little different from clouds from this distance. While the night sky looks calm and peaceful, the winds on the top of the Council Ruin are anything but. It whips through your clothes and makes it difficult to stand without leaning into it. While it is not cold enough to pose a serious threat, this location is not particularly pleasant and the wrecked spaceship offers little hope of comfort since it is barely more than twisted wreckage. From here you can see the glow of the archaeologists' compound, illuminated by a number of exterior lights, though there is no other sign of activity for miles.

The top of the Council Ruin curves only slightly, making it easy to walk on. It is five miles to the closest edge, and while the very top may be relatively level you will need to exercise more caution at the edges of the dome, which are much steeper.

If the PCs inspect the spaceship they can see there is no way it is flying again without a complete overhaul. Its once advanced systems are now home to rodents and there is little of value to salvage. Likewise the shaft they came up through seems to have no means of getting back down short of rappelling several thousand feet straight down. The best method of getting down seems to be walking, which is easy for the first four and a half miles. The last half mile grows more difficult as the incline becomes more steep, limiting the PCs to half movement without making a Climb or Balance check (DC 5) to keep from sliding down. If a PC hurries and fails their Climb or Balance check they begin sliding and must make a Climb or Balance check every round to stop themselves. If they do not stop by the steep part of the Council Ruin they will fall over the edge, which is a 100 foot drop.

The last one hundred feet are the only really dangerous part as the incline is steep enough to require Climb checks to get down. The characters can anchor a rope in one of the cracks in the structure, but they will probably not be getting that rope back afterward. The climb down is a distance of 100 feet, and requires a Climb check (DC 25, or 10 with a rope).

It is assumed that the PCs will take roughly two hours to cover the five miles involved in getting off the Council Ruin. Three hours after they reach the roof Dirtdigger Town will be attacked (see ENCOUNTER 3).

The PCs can head any direction from their starting point on the top of the Council Ruin, though the most likely directions are either to Dirtdigger Town, or their vehicle if they parked it somewhere else. If the PCs go in either direction, they will run into the Black Wheel Gang at the bottom of the Council Ruin. If they go to some other random location, they avoid the Black Wheel Gang.

◆ Encounter 2 Unexpected Reunion

After their last encounter with the PCs, the Black Wheel Gang decided to wait outside the ruin to ambush the PCs as they came back out. Thus they have either been waiting at the entrance to the ruins closest to Dirtdigger Town or to the PCs' vehicle, depending on how the PCs entered the Council Ruin. Unfortunately for the Black Wheel Gang the vaasi are now going on a rampage since the PCs escaped and will soon be coming up from below in large numbers, but a group of warhounds has already reached the surface and is stalking the Black Wheel Gang when they encounter the PCs.

If the PCs entered from near Dirtdigger town, read the following text aloud.

As your last comrade climbs down from the top of the Council Ruin nothing but a few hundred yards of open ground separates you from Dirtdigger Town. As you set off, carrying the gray box along with you, you hear the click of a gun safety come from a crack in the ruins behind you. A number of humanoid shapes lurk in the edges of shadows, the front one being a tall man with dark features carrying a large, antique pistol. "Hand it over," he says, gesturing toward the box with his other hand. Suddenly from behind the humans you hear a low growling hiss and several footfalls. The ambushers turn around to face a number of six legged, black plated dogs, all of which seem to be overjoyed with the new playthings they've found.

If the PCs came down near their vehicle read the following text aloud:

Finally you land on the ground after your trek across the roof of the Council Ruin, your transportation home only a short distance away. You all get several paces away from the wall of the Council Ruin when you hear someone clear their throat behind you. Looking through the hole that you used to enter the Council Ruins you see several humanoid figures step out of the shadows, led by a tall man with dark features carrying a large antique pistol. "Hand it over," he says, pointing at the gray box. Suddenly a growling hiss comes from deeper in the Council Ruin and all the newcomers spin around, turning to face a pack of six legged dog-like creatures covered in black plates. And then everything is gunfire and screams.

The vaasi are trying to catch the PCs before they get too far away from the Council Ruin, meaning all the vaasi in the lower depths of the Council Ruin are now running to the surface and are going to fan out over the surrounding area for the next few hours. The main force will arrive three hours after the PCs escaped with the artificial singularity. Until then the PCs will have to deal with packs of 3-6 warhounds,

like this one, which have arrived sooner due to their faster movement. Only warhounds and soldiers will attack the PCs during this offensive, the true vaasi hanging back until they get a real evaluation of the combat capabilities of the humans.

In both cases described above, there are 4 warhounds bent on attacking the PCs to get the artificial singularity, but the Black Wheel Gang is between them and the PCs. If the PCs run the warhounds will probably have their hands busy getting through the Black Wheel Gang, allowing the PCs to escape as the Black Wheel Gang either suffers serious casualties or is eliminated entirely. Once the PCs leave the scene their survival is unimportant, though they may make good recurring villains later in your campaign.

If the PCs stand and fight the Black Wheel Gang will actually work with them, all thoughts of profit overshadowed by those of survival. Assuming the PCs actually help the Black Wheel Gang survive this attack, such as killing the warhounds or letting the Black Wheel Gang into their vehicle, they will have gained allies for the duration of this adventure. If the Black Wheel Gang survives this encounter and the PCs continue to Dirdigger Town they will take part in the defense of the settlement to the best of their ability.

♦ FLEEING

If the PCs come down from the top of the Council Ruin near their vehicle instead of near Dirdigger Town, they can choose to flee the region immediately. If this happens they manage to avoid the final encounter and are considered to finish the adventure. However if they do this Dirdigger Town is destroyed and everyone in it, along with the Black Wheel Gang if the PCs do not save them, are killed by the vaasi rampage. Go to CHAPTER 5.

♦ ENCOUNTER 3 Final Battle

If the PCs have gone to Dirdigger Town after leaving the Council Ruin they have this encounter. If the PCs just flee the area they may go straight on to the next chapter.

If the PCs approach Dirdigger Town and they visited earlier or have a permit they will be allowed inside, though if the Black Wheel Gang is in tow they will be asked questions about the Black Wheel Gang.

If they do not have a permit they will be questioned outside the gate and the artificial singularity inspected before they are allowed inside. The inhabitants of Dirdigger Town have seen several warhounds wandering around near the Council Ruin so they are willing to let some individuals of questionable character in this evening since there seem to be monsters about. If the PCs are at all belligerent though they will be asked to leave at gunpoint.

Dr. Burkett will speak to the PCs immediately, saying for the last few minutes they've seen a lot of dog-like creatures running around near the ruins that fit the description of some of the creatures that have attacked the archaeologists in the depths of the Council Ruin. Dr. Burkett has ordered everyone to their posts and all defenses prepared, fearing some sort of xenomorph attack. He'll want to hear what the PCs have been up to and what the gray box they are carrying is, and will demand some details if they wish to stay in the compound. If they have a permit he will not try and take the box from them, but he wants to make sure it's not dangerous.

Three hours after the PCs flee Watchman 3's room the full vaasi assault begins. Assuming it took two hours for the PCs to get down from the roof and to Dirdigger Town; they have an hour to prepare before the danger arrives.

Read the following text aloud:

Suddenly from the watch tower on top of the supply shed at the center of the compound a cry of alarm is sounded as the EDF soldier on duty points toward the closest wall of the Council Ruin. While details are hard to make out, what looks like a small army of black-plated six legged beings, both upright and running on all their legs, is exiting the Council Ruin. Around the outskirts of the groups the six-legged dog creatures you encountered earlier run, obviously excited. As the main force moves closer to Dirdigger they fan out into a long line two ranks deep, all brandishing a variety of simple weapons. As one they let out one terrible cry, and then begin charging the compound.

The vaasi are not sure the artificial singularity is in the compound, but it's their best bet. There are twenty vaasi soldiers and ten warhounds charging the compound, beginning at a distance of six hundred feet. The warhounds will run at maximum speed until they reach the wall and will then try to climb over and kill everyone inside. The soldiers will run until they reach 120 feet from the wall, when half of them will continue running to the wall while the other half open fire with their crossbows, taking a move action each round to close with the compound and spending their standard action reloading or firing their crossbows. The goal of the soldiers is to get the gate open. The vaasi retreat as soon as twenty of their number are killed.

This final encounter affords an opportunity to run a massive set piece that will serve as an epic introduction to the vaasi threat. When running this battle each player should be given control of 3-4 soldiers and 1-2 archaeologists, while another player controls the Black Wheel Gang and Dr. Burkett (in addition to running their own PC of course). The soldiers will fight to the last man, but each time an archaeologist is killed the players controlling archaeologists should roll a Will save (DC 10+1 per archaeologist killed) to keep their archaeologists from becoming shaken. Dr. Burkett and the Black Wheel Gang will fight until the end since there is no promising route of escape. The PCs must fight off or escape from this horde if they wish to live. Even with the PCs' G-3 and the two G-3s in the compound, they do not have enough room to get everyone out, and more than likely by the time everyone was onboard the vaasi would be at the gate. It is up to the PCs to devise a plan to defeat this horde.

◆ POSSIBLE ACTIONS

Calling for Help

Anyone in the compound can use the radio to call for help, which will be answered by Ranger Reyes. She is relatively close by and will arrive in ten minutes with her four militia soldiers in tow. Being stuck outside the compound may limit their effectiveness, although on their scout bikes they are far more maneuverable than the vaasi. She will relay the request to Dawning Star City, and full military support in the form of two Dromedary Air Cargo Haulers carrying 16 soldiers each will arrive in one hour, along with four Myrmidon Vectored Thrust Assault Craft for further air support. Extensive ground support, including Basil APCs, will take many hours to arrive. If the PCs can last until help arrives, the soldiers will drive off the vaasi. If the PCs do not manage to get a distress signal off, no help will come for sixteen days when the next convoy arrives.

Moving the Machineguns

The EDF-2 machine guns on the rear of the compound may be moved to other positions. Each machine gun is on a collapsible tripod that requires two full round actions to take down and set up. The machine guns, tripods, and ammunition together weigh 70 pounds.

Running for It

It will require five rounds to get each of the G-3 vehicles loaded up with people, several of whom will have to ride in the cargo areas of the vehicles. Also the gate must be opened, which can only be done from outside the G-3s. Managing an escape will be extremely difficult to pull off.

Explosives

If the PCs think to ask, the archaeologists have a limited number of explosive charges they brought to clear rubble, but which have proved useless as they either cause no damage or create large cave-ins. These explosive charges are essentially bars of C4/Semtex, as described in the D20 MODERN Role-playing game. A Demolitions check (DC 5) can equip them with short timers, making them suitable for throwing, or the PCs may think up other uses for them.

◆ VICTORY

If the PCs and their allies kill twenty of the vaasi, either warhounds or soldiers, the rest retreat and scatter into the plains, hoping to reach safe haven before daylight. If Ranger Reyes has been contacted she will see about arranging a posse to track them down, which the PCs will be invited on. For the time being, the vaasi threat has been beaten back, but that will not last long.

◆ NPCs

Vaasi Soldier ◆ CR 4

Medium aberration; HD 3d8+9; hp 21; MAS 19; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+2 Dex, +5 natural, +2 armor); BAB +2; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (1d6+2/19-20, machete) or +4 ranged (1d10/19-20, crossbow); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+2/19-20, machete) or +4 ranged (1d10/19-20, crossbow); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, vaasi servitor; AL vaasi; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills: Hide +5, Move Silently +5, Spot +3, Survival +4.

Feats: Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Simple Weapon Proficiency.

Equipment: Machete, leather armor, crossbow, 23 bolts.

Vaasi Warhound ◆ CR 3

Small aberration; HD 3d8+6; hp 19; MAS 17; Init +7; Spd 40 ft.; Defense 19, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dex, +5 natural, +1 size); BAB +2; Grap -1; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, bite); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ; blindsight 60 ft., improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, vaasi servitor; AL vaasi; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +5; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 5, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills: Hide +7, Jump +9, Listen +3, Move Silently +9.

Feats: Improved Initiative.

Advancement: 4-9 HD (Medium).

CHAPTER 5: WRAP UP • • •

Regardless of whether they took part in the battle for Dirtdigger Town or simply fled into the darkness, if they lived the PCs are more than likely returning to civilization with the artificial singularity in tow. The following sections below provide guidelines for how the PCs make out from this venture, and how Eos is changed by it.

♦ THE DAWNING STAR REPUBLIC

If the PCs were working for the Dawning Star Republic and return the artificial singularity to Assistant Director Williams in Dawning Star City, or just give it to Dr. Burkett, it will be transported to the Department of Science for study. The PCs will receive their payment in full and a commendation from the Department of Science for their efforts. They will gain a +2 bonus to Reputation checks when dealing with members of the Department of Science. They will also be informed of the results of the Department of Science's research efforts, which will take many years to produce results due to their lack of knowledge of inter-dimensional physics. Still, it is the most important scientific discovery of the last fifty years and may very well be named after one of the PCs. The PCs will not be allowed to partake in the research unless they are part of the Department of Science and have appropriate skills; otherwise they will be told "top men" are working on it. Its existence will be a closely guarded secret since the singularity would destroy Eos if released, making it the most powerful weapon in existence. The players will be paid, congratulated, and kept apprised, but must never speak to anyone about it. If they go public with their knowledge they will face being publicly disavowed, embarrassed, and even charged with treason if they push the matter.

If some other group gets the artificial singularity and the Dawning Star Republic finds out, they will be very concerned and give serious thought to military action to attain it. PCs that are known to have given the artificial singularity to some other faction will be treated with suspicion by the Republic, if not arrested outright. They are not comfortable with such a powerful device being in the hands of others.

The information concerning the history of the artificial singularity will be of great interest to the Departments of History and Science, and will be analyzed and studied for years to come. The information will not be released to the public for several years in order to avoid panic regarding the singularity and the alien threat that may exist on Eos, and PCs who ignore this may face legal difficulties within the Republic.

♦ THE FACTION-CAMPS

If the PCs were hired by the faction-camps the handoff to Maria Caias goes off without a hitch, and the PCs get paid in full. Any double cross will be

met with lethal force later as the faction-camps will send numerous squads of thieves and assassins to retrieve the artificial singularity and will not rest until they have it. The faction-camps will completely cover up the existence of the artificial singularity, not even acknowledging its existence to the PCs. It will be transported to Roger's Point where the best scientists in the faction-camps will try and find a use for it, which will likely take decades.

The EFL is not looking to use the device as a weapon, since that would be suicidal, but perhaps as a power source or as a means to open their own gateways. The PCs will not be privy to any part of this process, and if they become too pushy to be involved they may be eliminated. The faction-camps want to keep the fact they have the artificial singularity completely secret, and are willing to kill to do it. They are less interested in the historical information gained, recording it but doing little with it.

♦ MAXIMILLIAN DAGOS

If the PCs were hired by Maximillian Dagos the day after they leave the ruins they are approached by four men in business suits who demand the artificial singularity, an event that happens regardless of location. If the PCs are in the wilderness the men are flown in by a Dromedary Air Cargo vehicle; if the PCs are in an urban environment they approach on foot. The men are agents of Maximillian Dagos and have tracked the PCs down using any of the dozens of tracking devices put on the equipment the PCs were given. Only if the PCs leave behind every piece of equipment from the G-3 can they avoid this.

If the PCs hand over the artificial singularity they will be paid by the four men in suits as the singularity is whisked away to Maximillian Dagos's spaceship in orbit. If they refuse the men will not resort to violence immediately, but agents of Dagos will attempt to steal the item and punish them for their crooked dealing in the near future.

If the PCs pass along the historical information to Maximillian Dagos, he will be very interested in it, particularly the possibility of an interplanetary space nation. He will step up his efforts to explore other worlds, possibly bringing the PCs in on the effort if they proved themselves competent. This opportunity will be covered in greater detail in *HELIOS RISING*.

♦ SELLING OR KEEPING THE SINGULARITY

If the PCs choose to keep the singularity they are in for quite an exciting time. Every faction that learns of the artificial singularity will want to possess it, making selling it difficult. The PCs will have to dodge thieves, assassins, and other troubles as they try to live to see a profit from their efforts. All the factions above will try to attain it through various means, the Dawning Star Republic concentrating

on legal means while the faction-camps prefer underhanded measures and Maximillian Dagos tries the promise of money. While selling the artificial singularity should not be impossible, it should not be easy either.

Instead of trying to sell it the PCs could simply keep it for themselves, though what they can do with it is questionable.

♦ THE FUTURE OF THE SINGULARITY

Regardless of who has it the singularity will pop up again in the adventure *SHADOW WAR*, so long as it is not destroyed everything is fine.

♦ THE BATTLE OF DIRTDIGGER TOWN

If the PCs took part in the Battle of Dirt digger Town and were instrumental in its defense they will be awarded the Silver Sun, the medal for civilian gallantry in the Dawning Star Republic. The Republic and the EDF will think highly of them, helping them out when possible and granting them the benefit of the doubt in the future. The PCs gain a +2 bonus to their Reputation when dealing with members of the Dawning Star Republic government or EDF. For the next few months, relic hunters, archaeologists, and others who live in the wild will be continually buying them drinks and showing other forms of favor.

♦ THE VAASI

With the Battle of Dirt digger Town the existence of the vaasi, or darklings, will finally be confirmed beyond a shadow of a doubt. Over the days following the battle word of it will spread and people will start becoming far less free about traveling in the wilderness, especially near ruins. Vaasi sightings will start to come out of the woodwork, and theories about what they are and what they want will begin to fly. To most people they will remain distant enigmas, but in the smaller settlements they become a real threat. Most frontier settlements and traveling groups like ranchers and barter jacks increase their security, and many go to the velin to learn how to better protect themselves.

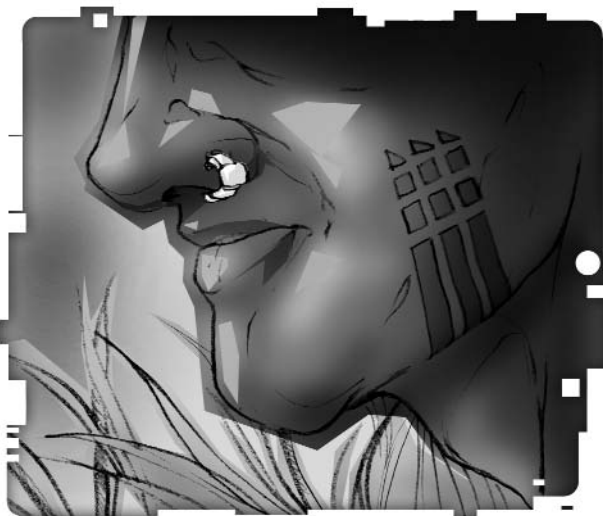
The Dawning Star Republic will begin a program of attempting to make peaceful contact with the vaasi, sending numerous expeditions to areas they are sighted to try and make contact. This will go badly for them, but how badly is up to the GM. The vaasi are not interested in peace, but are interested in gathering intelligence about their enemies and more advanced weapons. Dawning Star Republic teams sent to look for vaasi are likely to be captured and tortured for information. Eventually the Dawning Star Republic will learn they cannot be negotiated with and set about wiping the vaasi out, but by that point other groups will likely have changed the situation, such as the vaasi in the Cronus Belt.

The faction-camps will try to make deals with the vaasi for a bit, but come to the conclusion that doing so is impossible much faster than the Dawning Star Republic. They will then begin taking limited military action against the vaasi; not having the firepower to wipe them out, they will instead concentrate on surgical strikes while they attempt to learn more about them. The faction-camps will attempt to develop biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons to use against the vaasi, lacking the manpower to fight them by more conventional means.

The vaasi will defend against and eventually retaliate against these attacks. They lack the vehicles and weapons to make an effective offensive campaign against the humans of Eos, but they have a strong defensive position in their dark caves. Eventually the other planets of Eos will become involved, including the vaasi in the Cronus Belt, changing the scale of the conflict. These worlds will be discussed in more detail in *HELIOS RISING*.

♦ THE VELIN

With the vaasi revealed to all, the velin now feel their crusade has come and step up their efforts against the vaasi. Across Eos velin go to battle, trying to wipe out known vaasi power centers by recruiting the humans into the cause. While the humans do not join them as quickly as the velin would like, eventually the great crusade begins. Among the humans, the velin gain an immense amount of credibility as one of the major things that made humans think them slightly off-kilter has been proven true. This means the talk of them being here since the ruins and humans being their relatives may be true as well. Velin will be widely sought out for information regarding the vaasi, and some will even be brought in to train troops in the Dawning Star Republic and faction-camps. While the humans of Eos will be thrown into turmoil by the revelation of the existence of the vaasi, the velin instead have their beliefs confirmed. Their resolve is strengthened, and the time for war has come.



APPENDIX A: NPCS • • •

♦ THE BLACK WHEEL GANG, PROFESSIONAL RELIC HUNTERS

A group of experienced adventurers, the Black Wheel Gang have been working for several years as salvage experts and relic hunters, though they do more salvaging than relic hunting. While they began as honest businessmen searching ruins for interesting items, a few rough years have forced the Black Wheel Gang to more questionable pursuits. Now they are mainly involved in smuggling and doing various dirty deeds for the faction camps. While the Dawning Star Republic has no hard evidence of their activities, the true nature of the Black Wheel Gang is considered an open secret in many criminal and law enforcement circles. A Knowledge (Streetwise) check (DC 15) will reveal their group identity, modus operandi, and major members.

Over the years the Black Wheel Gang has worked for the EFL-aligned faction-camps primarily, but they avoid Roger's Point due to some bad history there. Lately they have been trying to do more jobs for independent settlements after some deals with the EFL went south. They have also worked for the Terraforming Guild several times and are suspected in the theft of several chemical shipments of equipment from the terraforming fields to Dawning Star Republic facilities, but as yet nothing has been proven.

The Black Wheel Gang is a motley bunch of troublemakers, thugs, thieves, and technicians, many of whom have extensive criminal histories. It is led by a dark-haired man of Turkish descent named Stafford, the only member of the gang without any sort of criminal record. The other Black Wheel Gang members are very loyal to him, with less loyal members being forced out over time. There have been mutinies when operations turned unprofitable in the past, but these usually ended in the mutineers being shot in short order, a process that

trimmed down the Black Wheel Gang to a small core of loyal members. Stafford does not suffer disobedience well, preferring to rule by fear than love, a process that, when combined with the lack of success the gang has seen lately, may lead to future problems despite the loyalty of his underlings.

Despite their checkered past and violent habits, the Black Wheel Gang is not wantonly destructive. They know that getting tried for murder is worse than getting tried for theft and so rarely are violent except when necessary, preferring the threat of violence than the act of it. When they do use force they tend to rely on nonlethal means such as tasers, tangle guns, and sonic grenades, only using firearms when they are very angry or can safely and surely eliminate all witness. They have little ego, preferring to get out alive, preferably with some cash, than to save face. In the final battle of the adventure this trait may turn them from enemies to allies of the PCs, as their survival instincts will lead them to fight against the vaasi when faced with overwhelming odds.

Stafford, Leader of the Black Wheel Gang

A large, broad-shouldered man, most of the Black Wheel Gang know little of his past and assume him to be from one of the more militant faction-camps. A terse man given to sentences of such brevity they border of being nonsensical, he projects an air of command, intellect, and menace. He never is without his ancient .50 Desert Eagle pistol, an antique brought over by his father from Earth, and his suit of black-dyed rough-outs.

Despite his fearsome appearance and intimidating manner, something he works constantly to cultivate, Stafford has little actual military training. He is the son of an accountant and grew up in Dawning Star City, his only real military training coming from a stint in the Republic Militia. The .50 Desert Eagle is from his father's gun collection and never saw use before Stafford took it. While Stafford does not have the military skills to back up his demeanor, he does have the charisma and cunning to carry it off successfully. His keen mind is well tuned to the behavior patterns of others, giving him a good idea as to who may betray him.

Stafford

**(Charismatic Hero 3 / Tough Hero 2
Dedicated Hero 1) ♦ CR 6**

Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 4d6+2d10+6; hp 32; MAS 13; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 18, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (+4 class, +1 Dex, +3 armor); BAB +2; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (1d4, survival knife), +4 ranged (2d10, .50 Desert Eagle); Full +2 melee (1d4, survival knife), +4 ranged (2d8, .50 Desert Eagle); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ; AL Black Wheel Gang; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +5; AP 8; Rep +3; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 15.



PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Criminal

Skills: Barter +8, Bluff +8, Climb +4, Diplomacy +8, Drive +4, Gamble +3, Gather Information +8, Intimidate +12, Investigate +5, Knowledge (Streetwise) +8, Read/Write Language (English), Speak Language (English), Sense Motive +7, Survival +5.

Talents: Coordinate, Command, Empathy, Remain Conscious

Feats: Armor Proficiency (Light), Attentive, Confident, Iron Will, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Surface Vehicle Operation (Trucks), Weapon Focus (.50 Desert Eagle).

Possessions: Rough-outs, .50 Desert Eagle, 4 clips, 2 fragmentation grenades, portable glow lamp, compass, survival knife, 5 days of trail rations, nightvision goggles, 2 sonic grenades, tangler gun, 2 tangler grenades



Kelena Tullah

Originally from Roger's Point, Kelena Tullah and her brother Rashad worked for many years as security consultants, providing security systems to some high paying clients in the Dawning Star Republic and the wealthier faction-camps. At the same time on the side they helped others bypass these security systems in exchange for a cut of the profits. While they themselves were not thieves, they assisted many such individuals in the performance of their profession. The Tullahs did not ask their clients anything about why they needed to bypass their security systems, claiming this ignorance kept them from any responsibility for the actions of their clients. For many years the people of Roger's Point accepted this story, mainly because most of the thieves the Tullahs assisted

stole from residents of the Dawning Star Republic as opposed to EFL faction-campers. When one of their clients instead stole several valuable high-tech gadgets from a close ally of Patricia Rogers, Roger's Point became decidedly less friendly toward the siblings. They left shortly thereafter, hooking up with Stafford through one of their black market contacts. They became the first two members of the Black Wheel Gang.

Kelena now serves as the resident medic and chemist of the Black Wheel Gang, occasionally putting her extensive knowledge of poisons to use on the gang's jobs. Not a frontline combatant, she prefers laying traps and ambushes for her opponents and has no qualms about killing when pressed. Of all the Black Wheel Gang, she is the most willing to take a life if necessary, something that isn't readily apparent in her normally sunny demeanor. Kelena has long blonde hair and is of moderate height. She wears a suit of gray rough-outs when in the field and carries a large bag made out of Dawson dragon hide and filled with medical supplies and chemicals.

Kelena Tullah

(Smart Hero 3/Dedicated Hero 2) ♦ CR 5

Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 5d6+5; hp 23; MAS 12; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 18, touch 15, flat-footed 16 (+3 class, +2 Dex, +3 armor); BAB +2; Grap +1; Atk +2 melee (1d3 electricity and stun, stun gun) or +4 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 Auto Pistol); Full +2 melee (1d3 electricity and stun, stun gun) or +4 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 Auto Pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL Black Wheel Gang; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +5; AP 7; Rep +2; Str 9, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 10.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Technician

Skills: Computer Use +9, Craft (Chemical) +12, Craft (Electrical) +9, Craft (Mechanical) +9, Craft (Pharmaceutical) +13, Demolitions +9, Disable Device +9, Forgery +9, Knowledge (Technology) +9, Read/Write Language (English), Repair +9, Sense Motive +5, Speak Language (English), Spot +5, Survival +5, Treat Injury +10.

Talents: Exploit Weakness, Healing Touch, Savant (Craft (Chemical)).

Feats: Armor Proficiency (Light), Medical Expert, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Surface Vehicle Operation (Trucks), Surgery.

Possessions: Rough outs, fast use medkit, EDF-9 Auto Pistol, 4 clips, deluxe chemistry kit, chemicomp sensor, solvaway chemical, 2 doses of sporekill chemical, 2 doses of antitox chemical, stun gun.

Rashad Tullah

Brother of Kelena, in their original security consulting business he provided the mechanical know how, constructing complex security systems for those who could afford it. While Rashad is an expert on traps and locks of all kinds, he secretly has harbored a love for research xenotech his entire life, a love that went unfulfilled during his days as a security consultant. He has spent much of his spare time reading up on the discoveries in the ruins of Eos, always dreaming of making such discoveries himself. Unlike his sister, he looked at their sudden need to leave Roger's Point as being a blessing, as it allowed him to pursue his interest in alien artifacts. Rashad was the major force behind the Tullah siblings joining up with Stafford, Rashad hoping that a career as a relic hunter would allow him to get his hands on some alien relics. Thus far the group has only had limited success as relic hunters and Rashad has not found anything really noteworthy, instead spending his time involved in criminal pursuits more like his old job. This has not made him very enthused about the Black Wheel Gang operations, but their current job has his enthusiastic support.

In the field Rashad wears a suit of light combat armor over a suit of overalls, all covered with a number of tool belts. He has a tool for any occasion and is usually weighed down by a backpack full of equipment of some sort. Of all the Black Wheel Gang he makes the most effort to keep himself clean and presentable, and has an appreciation for fine food and clothing that the others often find humorous. His curiosity often gets the better of him, leading the rest of the Black Wheel Gang into danger on several occasions. Rashad views such danger as being unavoidable, feeling there is no sacrifice to great for knowledge, but he prefers it when someone else makes that sacrifice.

Rashad

(Smart Hero 5) ♦ CR 5

Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 5d6+5; hp 23; MAS 12; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 16, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+2 class, +1 Dex, +3 armor); BAB +2; Grap +1; Atk +1 melee (1d4-1, survival knife), +3 ranged (2d8, Brase hunting rifle); Full +1 melee (1d4-1, survival knife), +3 ranged (2d8, Brase hunting rifle); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ; AL Black Wheel Gang; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +5; AP 7; Rep +2; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 10.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Technician

Skills: Computer Use +13, Craft (Electrical) +11, Craft (Mechanical) +11, Craft (Structural) +11, Decipher Script +13, Disable Device +11, Investigate +11, Knowledge (History) +13, Knowledge (Technology) +13, Read/Write



Language (English), Repair +13, Research +11, Search +13, Speak Language (English).

Talents: Identify Alien Technology, Utilize Alien Technology, World Knowledge (Eos).

Feats: Armor Proficiency (Light), Educated, Gearhead, Meticulous, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Salvage.

Possessions: Light combat armor, Brase hunting rifle, 34 bullets, survival knife, deluxe mechanical tool kit, deluxe electrical tool kit, tangler grenade.

Jake the Velin

Jaketovkis of the northern Black Ice Tribe is a rarity among the velin; from his first contact with humans he found their ways strange and enticing. He took every opportunity he could to interact with them, thinking their world of steel and hurry far more interesting than the quiet life of his tribe. When Jaketovkis came of age he left his tribe and headed south toward the humans, eventually ending up in Roger's Point. Despite some early difficulties adapting to the human city, Jaketovkis ended up hiring on with Stafford since Stafford was the first human to offer him a job as a laborer and thug. Jaketovkis proved himself loyal and capable to Stafford, and now is the member of the Black Wheel Gang Stafford trusts the most. Jaketovkis, called Jake by the rest of the Black Wheel Gang, serves as the group's muscle. Jake doesn't completely understand why they all enjoy digging around ruins so much and do not take joy in the simple pleasures that they have in abundance, such as the wind in their faces when traveling and the many places they get to see. While he marvels at their accomplishments, Jake also finds humans to be very foolish and short sighted, but he feels it is not his place to instruct them.



JAKETOVKIS

Jake is large, even for a velin, and usually wears velin hunting armor in the field over an explorer outfit. Jake has gone completely bald despite his young age, a rarity among the velin. He carries a Brase shotgun, but prefers dealing with problems with his bazer sword.

Jake (Strong Hero 5) ♦ CR 5

Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 5d8+15; hp 38; MAS 19; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+3 class, +5 armor); BAB +5; Grap +8; Atk +8 melee (1d6+1d6+6/19-20, bazer sword) or +5 ranged (2d10, Brase shotgun); Full +8 melee (1d6+1d6+6/19-20, bazer sword) or +5 ranged (2d10, Brase shotgun); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Low-light vision, detect vaasi; AL Black Wheel Gang; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +2; AP 7; Rep +1; Str 17, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 8.

PL Familiarity: 3

Occupation: Hunter

Skills: Climb +7, Jump +7, Speak Language (English, Velin), Survival +9.

Talents: Melee Smash, Improved Melee Smash, Advanced Melee Smash

Feats: Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Cleave, Improved Damage Threshold, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Power Attack, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Possessions: Bazer sword, velin hunter armor, velin war shield, survival knife, portable glow lamp, 4 days of rations, Brase shotgun, 12 shells, 2 sonic grenades.

Telela Drashen

Originally from the Dawning Star Republic settlement of Hapeville, Telela left her home town at an

early age to try and find a more interesting life among the bright lights and bustle of Dawning Star City. She never actually made it to the city, instead falling in with a group of traveling barter jacks, with whom she spent several years wandering around the outer settlements of the Republic helping them hawk their wares. Finally Telela, bored of the merchanting life and yearning for something more exciting, decided to give relic hunting a try. Her first effort at this was done alone in a ruin near Greenville, and her first hunt was almost her last. Cornered by spitter spiders, she was saved at the last minute by the Black Wheel Gang, who she has been traveling with ever since. Telela serves as one of the main drivers for the group and often uses her skills of persuasion to get the gang out of a jam.

A tall, thin woman, Telela has long red hair and usually wears a set of rough-outs that looks to be several sizes too big. She carries an EDF-12 submachine normally and rarely carries much else in the way of equipment, preferring to leave it in the gang's two S-15 ground transports.

Telela

(Charismatic Hero 2/Fast Hero 3) ♦ CR 5

Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 2d6+3d8; hp 21; MAS 9; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 21, touch 18, flat-footed 18 (+5 class, +3 Dex, +3 armor); BAB +3; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d3 electricity and stun, stun gun) or +6 ranged (2d6+1, EDF-12 submachine gun); Full +3 melee (1d3 electricity and stun, stun gun) or +6 ranged (2d6+1, EDF-12 submachinegun); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ; AL Black Wheel Gang; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +2; AP 7; Rep +3; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 14.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Rural



TELELA DRASHEN

Skills: Barter +7, Bluff +7, Diplomacy +7, Drive +13, Gather Information +7, Hide +6, Knowledge (Business) +6, Knowledge (Streetwise) +4, Move Silently +6, Perform (Sing) +7, Pilot +11, Read/Write Language (English), Speak Language (English), Survival +6.

Talents: Charm, Evasion, Sharpshooter

Feats: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Surface Vehicle Operation (Trucks), Trustworthy, Vehicle Expert.

Possessions: Rough-outs, EDF-12 submachine gun, 5 clips, radio, 3 sonic grenades, taser

Black Wheel Gang Thugs

The Black Wheel Gang hires thugs as needed from around the faction camps to fill out their ranks and assist in heavy labor. These thugs are not hired for their minds and are expected to do as they're told, which usually involves fighting or various menial tasks. These individuals are only loyal as long as they are paid and their actions have a reasonable expectation of producing profit. They will not fight for lost causes, not that the Black Wheel Gang is likely to do that in the first place. These thugs could be bribed to change sides in the middle of a fight if offered more money, but men whose loyalties change so quickly are not to be trusted.

The Black Wheel Gang may be accompanied by a number of these thugs if the GM feels the core members of the gang are not enough of a challenge for the PCs. Also each of the core gang members killed will be replaced with 2 thugs by the next encounter, except after Encounter 3 the Black Wheel Gang will receive no reinforcements.

Black Wheel Gang Thug (Tough Ordinary 4) ♦ CR 3

Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 4d10+11; hp 33; MAS 15; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 17, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+3 class, +1 Dex, +3 armor); BAB +3; Grap +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2, machete) or +4 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 knockoff); Full +5 melee (1d6+2, machete) or +4 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 knockoff); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL Money; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1; AP 0; Rep +; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Criminal

Skills: Climb +6, Drive +6, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (Streetwise) +5, Read/Write Language (English), Speak Language (English), Spot +5, Survival +4.

Talents: None

Feats: Armor Proficiency (Light), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Toughness.

Possessions: Rough outs, EDF-9 knockoff, 3 clips, survival knife, portable glow lamp, machete,

APPENDIX B • • •

♦ DIRTDIGGER TOWN

The compound used by the archaeologists, which has come to be called Dirt digger Town, was meant to be a temporary base for Dawning Star Republic operations around the Council Ruins, but has since become a permanent structure. The velin are none too pleased about this, and have asked the Republic to limit Dirt digger Town to the confines of the fence they have constructed. The archaeologists have been very careful about following this guideline and leave none of their gear out of the compound unattended. Leaving items outside previously has often resulted in them going missing, which is usually due to the velin providing an annoying reminder to the archaeologists to stay within their established boundaries. The archaeologists have also lost several of their number to xenomorph attacks within the Council Ruin and no one travels alone inside the Council Ruin, with most of the archaeologists traveling in groups of at least four. None of the inhabitants of Dirt digger Town venture out after dark as most of the xenomorph attacks have occurred after dark, several of which have been vaasi warhounds, which the archaeologists have not been able to identify. The increasing frequency of such attacks has started to put the fear of darklings in the compounds residents, and they will warn the PCs not to enter the Council Ruins after dark.

Dirt digger Town has had to deal with bandits, relic hunters, angry velin dissidents, and xenomorph attacks in its five years of operation and has slowly upgraded its defenses in response. Now all the archaeologists carry firearms at all times and a contingent of eight EDF soldiers is assigned to the compound at all times. Anyone who approaches the compound is greeted outside, and those without permits are asked to leave. Any resistance is met with deadly force.

Most of the individuals stationed in Dirt digger Town are here for six month stints. The archaeologists see this as an excellent opportunity to do some valuable research on the ruins of Eos, while the soldiers see it as little more than a milk run. Despite the problems the compound has had with hostile creatures and individuals, it is considered an easy assignment.

In addition to the buildings in Dirt digger Town there are two G-3 survey vehicles and four scout bikes stored within its fence. There is also a small forklift used for moving supplies, but it sees little use. The compound is resupplied every month by a convoy from Dawning Star City, which includes several new personnel each trip and carries home personnel whose time at the compound are done. The compound has enough supplies for three months for twenty people in case Dirt digger Town is somehow cut off from the Republic. While Dirt digger Town has a radio it has little contact with the outside

world beyond Ranger Reyes and the local velin. It has a connection to the Eonet hooked up through its radio transmitter.

THE FENCE

The fence surrounding Dirtdigger Town is a ten foot tall steel wire fence topped with slicer wire, a more unfriendly version of razor-wire. Climbing the fence is relatively easy, requiring a Climb check (DC 10), but getting over the slicer wire is more difficult. Doing so requires a full round action and a Dexterity check (DC 15); failure results in the character taking 1d6 points of slashing damage and becoming stuck on the slicer wire. Becoming unstuck requires a full round action and an Escape Artist check (DC 15), with each failed check inflicting a further 1d6 points of damage. The fence has a hardness of 10 and 10 hit points per square foot.

The single gate in the fence has a sturdy locking mechanism that requires a code to open. The code is known to all the staff of the compound and bypassing the lock requires a Disable Device check (DC 30). The locking device has a hardness of 15 and 30 hit points.

1. BARRACKS

The second largest room in Dirtdigger Town, the barracks serves as a home for all twenty occupants of the compound. Little more than bunk beds, foot-lockers, closets, and a unisex shower and rest room, it is not very well appointed. It is comfortable enough, but there is no privacy, even between the sexes. The barracks also contains a small kitchen and most meals are eaten sitting outside or on the beds of the barracks. The inhabitants of the compound keep all their personal belongings in this room, and a large steel crate in the back of the barracks serves as the armory for the compound. In it are 6 EDF-9 pistols, 6 EDF-15 assault rifles, 24 clips for each type of weapon, 500 rounds for the EDF-2 heavy machineguns, 6 suits of light combat armor, 12 fragmentation grenades, and 2 tangler guns with 10 clips each, plus enough storage space to hold the weapons carried by the 20 inhabitants of the building. Each inhabitant of the barracks has a number of personal objects, and most have a few extra pistol clips and a suit of rough-outs tucked away in their gear. The walls of the barracks are steel and have a hardness of 10.

2. MACHINEGUN POSTS

At each corner of Dirtdigger Town is a raised metal platform containing an EDF-2 heavy machine gun and 500 rounds of ammunition. Each machine gun can fire in a 180 degree arc around its corner of the compound, so that only the areas right up next to the walls are not in their field of fire. These machine guns are not normally manned unless

something is sighted approaching the compound. The towers provide $\frac{3}{4}$ cover to anyone inside them and have a hardness of 10 and 80 hit points.

3. RESEARCH ROOM

The largest building in Dirtdigger Town, the research room is actually an armored and airtight building divided up into several smaller rooms where most of the research, examining, and cataloging takes place. It is filled with items taken from the Council Ruin in various states of research. After these items are given a cursory inspection here they are part of the monthly shipment back to Dawning Star city for further analysis. Most of the materials contained in here are simple objects like broken plates, computer bits, shards of unknown crystals, and other similarly mundane objects that have no value outside of historic importance. In the five years Dirtdigger Town has been in operation, only three functional relics have been discovered, but the aim of the operation is not to find relics but to unlock the history of Eos. In this regard they are fairly successful, as they believe they have developed a somewhat detailed picture of life in the days of the Council Dome. There are no relics stored in the compound currently, and the items in the research room have little value beyond scholarly interest and would fetch little if sold. Unfortunately many of the less honorable relic hunters don't know this and assume it is full to the brim with amazing discoveries, making it the prime goal of attacks on Dirtdigger Town. The research room has only a single armored door for an entrance, which has a hardness of 20 and 40 hit points. It requires a code to open, but may be bypassed with a Disable Device check (DC 30). Each room in the building has a similar door. The walls of the building are made of reinforced steel and have a hardness of 15 and 15 hit points per square foot.

4. SUPPLY HUT

The tallest building in Dirtdigger Town, the supply hut is a large, temp-crete structure that is used to hold the various supplies and goods needed by the compound. Most items listed in d20 Modern besides vehicles, weapons, and armor can be found in this building, but doing so may take some effort. The supply hut is the only two-story building in the compound and is used as a lookout post by the EDF soldiers stationed in Dirtdigger Town. They have constructed a small tower on top, allowing them to see for miles in every direction. One soldier is always on duty on its roof with binoculars looking for trouble. The radio transmitter for the compound is located on top of the building. The roof is reached via a ladder on the side of the building, which may be climbed without difficulty. The walls of the supply hut have a hardness of 10 and 15 hit points per square foot.

◆ NPCs

Dr. Alan Burkett

A career researcher from the Department of Science, Dr. Burkett is a respected scholar of relics and artifacts left by the previous inhabitants of Eos. In his time in Dirtdigger Town he has become far more competent in matters of combat, but now his scholarly work suffers as he spends more time running the compound than conducting research. An affable man, he is well liked by the archaeologists and soldiers. He has a suit of rough-outs, but rarely wears them. He can acquire additional weapons from the armory if needed and will be involved in any defense of Dirtdigger Town.

A professional academic, Dr. Burkett has spent most of his life in the wilds of Eos digging up various ruins and relics. He is surprisingly easy going about the threats faced during such efforts, and has many stories to share about xenofom attacks. He is extremely laid back, even when under pressure or threatened, always certain things will turn out for the best.

Dr. Burkett

(Smart Hero 5/Field Scientist 5) ◆ CR 10

Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 5d6+5d8; hp 41; MAS 10; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 18, touch 18, flat-footed 14 (+4 class, +4 Dex); BAB +4; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (1d3 nonlethal, punch), +6 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 Auto Pistol); Full +4 melee (1d3 nonlethal, punch), +6 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 Auto Pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Minor breakthrough, scientific improvisation, skill mastery (Computer Use, Decipher Script, Disable Device, Investigate, Research, Search) smart defense; AL Dawning Star Republic; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +6; AP 11; Rep +3; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 12.

PL Familiarity: 7

Occupation: Academic

Skills: Computer Use +11, Decipher Script +18, Demolitions +8, Disable Device +16, Drive +6, Forgery +11, Investigate +18, Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences) +18, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +18, Knowledge (History) +23, Knowledge (Technology) +18, Knowledge (Theology and Philosophy) +11, Navigate +8, Read Language (English, Mandarin Chinese, Unispeak), Research +15, Sense Motive +4, Speak Language (English, Mandarin Chinese, Unispeak), Search +8.

Talents: Identify Alien Technology, Savant (Knowledge (History)), Utilize Alien Technology.

Feats: Attentive, Educatedx2, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Surface Vehicle Operation (Trucks), Studious, Technological Aptitude, Weapon Focus (EDF-9 Auto Pistol).



Possessions: EDF-9 auto pistol, 3 clips, holster, work clothes, glasses, info-comp, deluxe evidence kit.

EDF Soldiers

The eight EDF soldiers assigned to Dirtdigger Town consider the duty to be relatively easy and pleasant, though boring. There is little excitement to be had other than occasional encounters with relic hunters and xenofoms, and little entertainment is present to fill the vast stretches of boredom in between. Most of the soldiers do a great deal of reading, and some have even become amateur archaeologists in order to pass the time.

EDF Soldiers (Strong Ordinary 2 / Tough Ordinary 2) ◆ CR 3

Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 2d10+2d8+8; hp 29; MAS 15; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 16, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+2 class, +1 Dex, +3 armor); BAB +3; Grap +5; Atk +5 melee (1d8+2, whipstick), +4 ranged (2d8, EDF-15 Assault Rifle); Full +5 melee (1d8+2, whipstick), +4 ranged (2d8, EDF-15 Assault Rifle); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ; AL Dawning Star Republic; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +0; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Military

Skills: Climb +4, Drive +7, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (Tactics) +6, Read/Write Language (English), Speak Language (English), Survival +5.

Talents: None

Feats: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Heavy Machine guns), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency.

Possessions: Whipstick, EDF-15, 5 clips, survival knife, uniform, light combat armor

Archaeologists

Most of the archaeologists at Dirtdigger Town have only been there a few months and are not fully acclimated to life out in the wild. Most had spent their entire lives in Dawning Star City; this is all very much a new experience to them. While all the archaeologists underwent militia training as part of their preparation for this assignment, they are none too interested in entering combat. Archaeologists can get additional armor or weapons from the armory when needed and will work to defend Dirtdigger Town at the direction of Dr. Burkett or the EDF soldiers, but will not go looking for a fight.

Archaeologists (Smart Ordinary 4) ♦ CR 3

Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 4d6; hp 14; MAS 10; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 11, touch 11, flat-footed 11 (+1 class); BAB +2; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (1d3 nonlethal, punch), +2 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 auto pistol); Full +2 melee (1d3 nonlethal, punch), +2 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 auto pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL Dawning Star Republic; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +4; AP 0; Rep +2; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 11.

PL Familiarity: 6

Occupation: Academic

Skills: Computer Use +10, Decipher Script +12, Disable Device +10, Drive +3, Investigate +10, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +10, Knowledge (History) +12, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) +10, Knowledge (Technology) +12, Knowledge (Theology and Philosophy) +10, Research +12, Search +10, Spot +3, Survival +5.

Talents: None

Feats: Republic Militia Training, Educated, Studious.

Possessions: Info-comp, tools appropriate to current research, EDF-9 auto-pistol with 2 clips.

APPENDIX C: XENOMORPHS • • •

♦ STAR CONFEDERATION ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ENTITIES

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

most people these entities seemed to be completely sentient beings, but in fact they are merely very good facsimiles of such.

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

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

Species Traits

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

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

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

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

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

1. Artificial intelligence entities may not order nanites to create more nanites.

2. Artificial intelligence entities must work to preserve the lives of Star Confederation citizens and allied races. It is not permissible to take the life of such creatures.

3. Artificial intelligence entities may not share technology except with suitable advanced races that will use it responsibly.

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

Challenge Rating: Artificial intelligence entities have a challenge rating equal to their class level. An artificial intelligence entity implanted in a robot or other device has a challenge rating equal to their class level plus the challenge rating of the robot or other device.

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

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

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

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

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

Non-Physical Existence: Artificial intelligence entities have no physical existence, instead taking the form of billions of lines of computer code. They have no physical abilities, gaining those from whatever device they inhabit if they are placed in a robot or other device capable of physical motion. The entity applies its mental abilities, skills, feats, base attack bonus, class defense bonuses, and saving throw bonuses to any physical body it inhabits, assuming the body has the means to use the abilities in question. If the body does not meet the requirements of a feat or ability, that feat or ability may not be used while the entity resides in that body. Most artificial intelligence entities were stored in large mainframe

computers with no movement capabilities.

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

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

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

Artificial Intelligence Entity (Smart Hero 4) ♦ CR 4

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

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

Talents: Linguist, Savant (Computer Use).

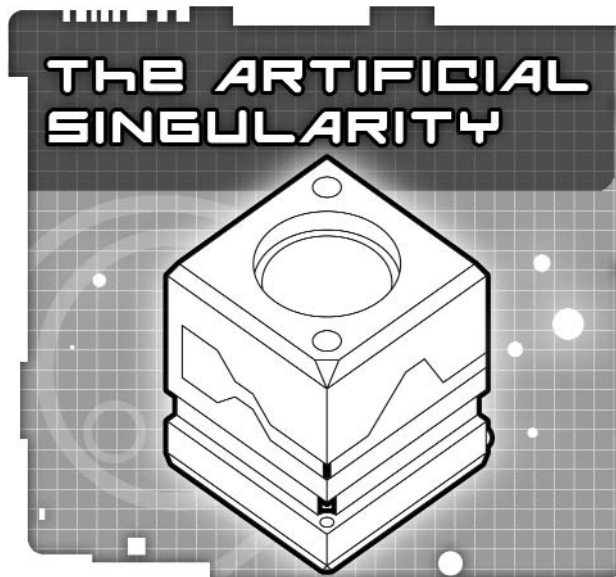
Feats: Educated, Iron Will, Low Profile, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Studious.

Advancement: By class.

APPENDIX D: RELICS • • •

♦ THE ARTIFICIAL SINGULARITY

The artificial singularity is possibly the most powerful device in the universe. It consists of a stable artificial black hole, contained in an extra-dimensional space until it is needed. The case for the artificial singularity is actually the device used to open a portal to the extra-dimensional space and most of



the time holds nothing at all. This is because keeping the artificial singularity in this dimension while stopping it from destroying everything around it requires a massive force field and consumes a ridiculous amount of power. Instead, the artificial singularity is left in a parallel dimension, one of small size that is completely empty, until it is needed. The artificial singularity is configured so it will not activate unless the force field projector relic from THE EDGE OF SHADOW is also attached and powered up, as otherwise the singularity would destroy everything nearby. These two devices require such an immense amount of energy that activating them is likely to be impossible for the Dawning Star Republic. Fiddling with the device is relatively safe since there are many safeguards built into the artificial singularity device, though with a Repair or Disable Device check (DC 45) the safeguards could be bypassed and the artificial singularity unleashed on the surrounding area, a process that would destroy the entire Helios system and everything in it. The artificial singularity is a PL 10 device. It weighs 10 pounds, has a hardness of 50, and 20 hit points. The purchase DC of the artificial singularity is beyond calculation as it is the most powerful item ever made.

♦ DISINTEGRATOR RIFLE

A tool of war once used by the Star Confederation, disintegration weapons have since become the standard weapon of the tentaari. A disintegrator rifle was considered a portable infantry support and anti-armor weapon that could be used by a single individual. During the last days of the Star Confederation several of them were retrofitted into the security system of the Council Dome in the hopes of taking out a few invaders, and a few of them remain active in the bowels of the complex. These disintegrator rifles have been modified to rely on gravity sensors to fire, and

STAR CONFEDERATION DISINTEGRATOR RIFLE

Weapon*	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	RoF	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Rifle	9	6d12	20	Disint.	80 feet.	S	20 box	Small	3 lb.	50+	NA

cannot be fired as normal weapons without extensive modifications, requiring six hours of work, a Repair check (DC 20) and spare parts with a purchase DC of 15 and Progress Level penalties apply. The purchase DC of a disintegrator rifle on Eos would be determined by market forces, but would be at least 50.

The abilities listed above are for a fully charged disintegrator rifle.

♦ GRAVITY SENSOR

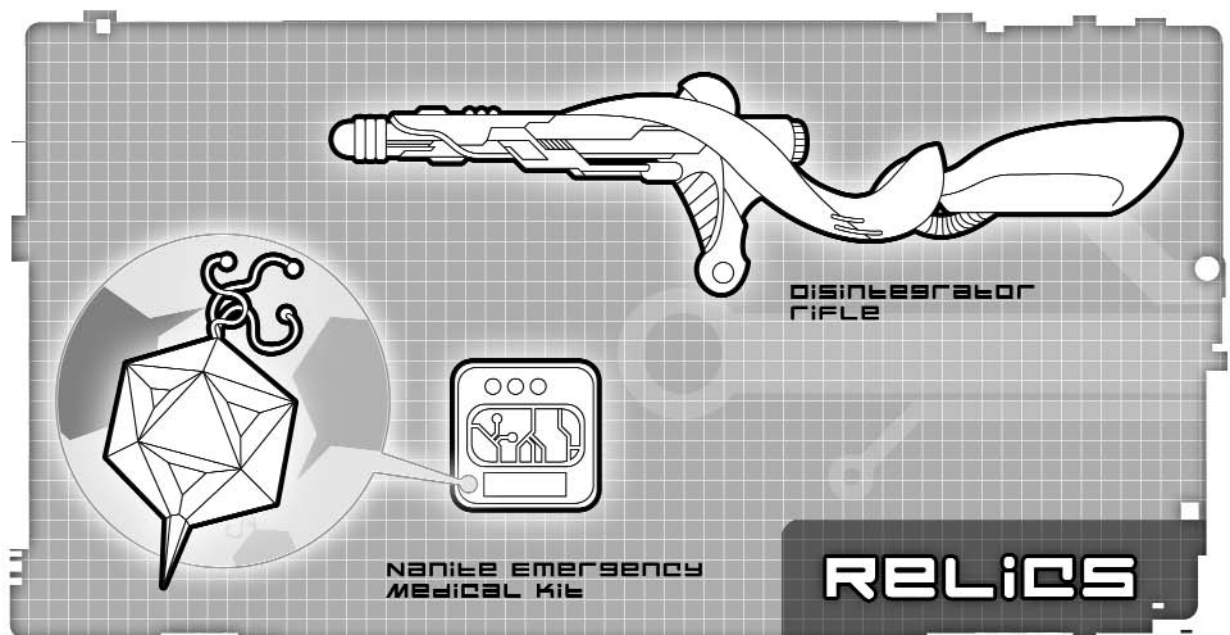
While not the most accurate sensor system created by the Star Confederation, it does have the advantage of being impossible to fool using all known cloaking technologies. It reads the gravitational fields created by all manner of objects in its proximity and creates a three dimensional map of surrounding matter based on this information. While the gravity sensor is not effective at reading minute details and is completely colorblind, it is still a highly effective sensor unit. Gravity sensors are considered to have blindsight with a range of 60 feet and weigh 3 pounds.

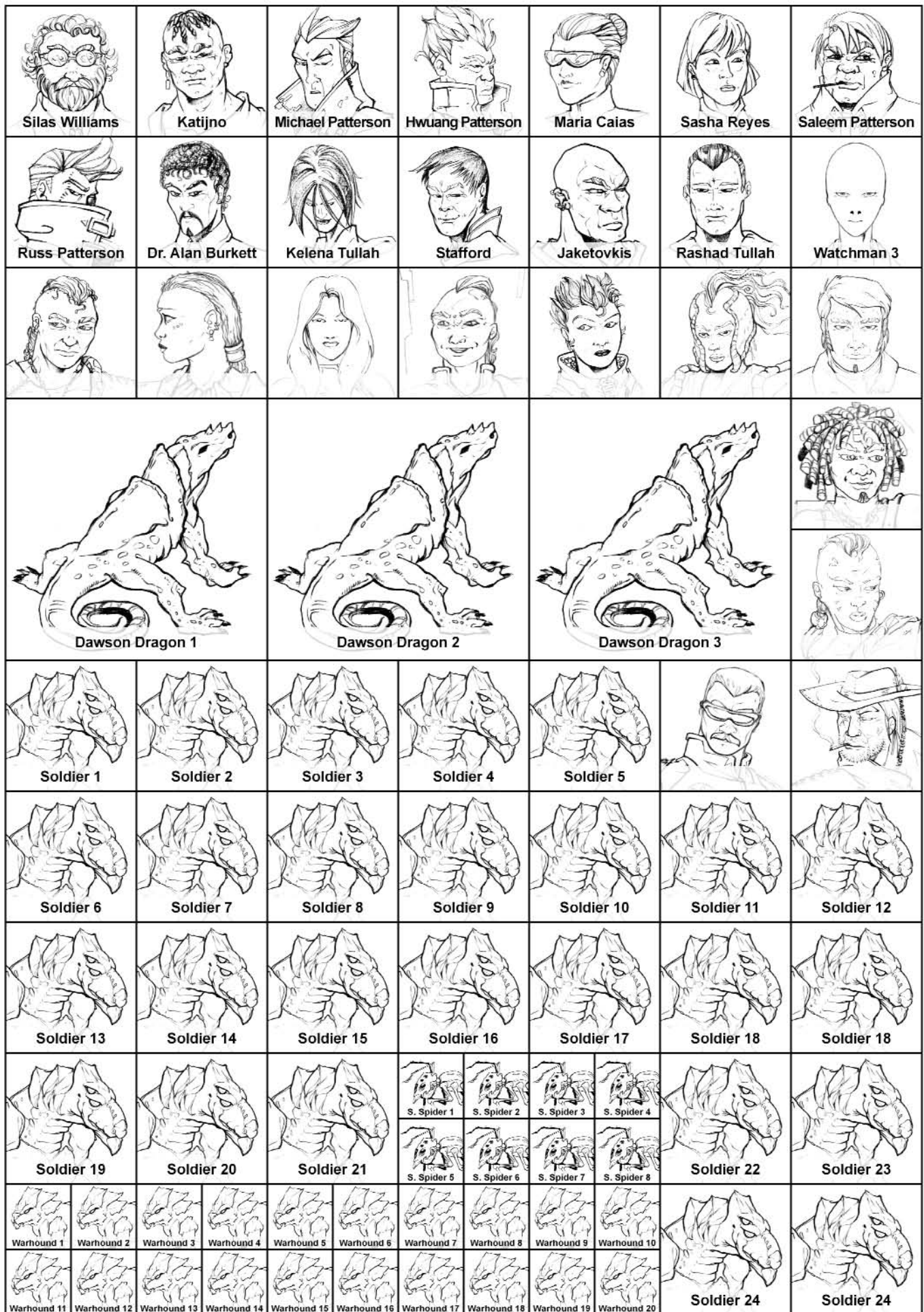
The gravity sensor found by the PCs has been jury-rigged and only has a range of 20 feet. It was equipped to feed its information into the disintegrator cannon and has no exterior display for the information it gathers to be displayed through. Modifying the gravity sensor to have some type of monitor or display that would allow the PCs to use it requires six hours of work, a Repair check (DC 20), and

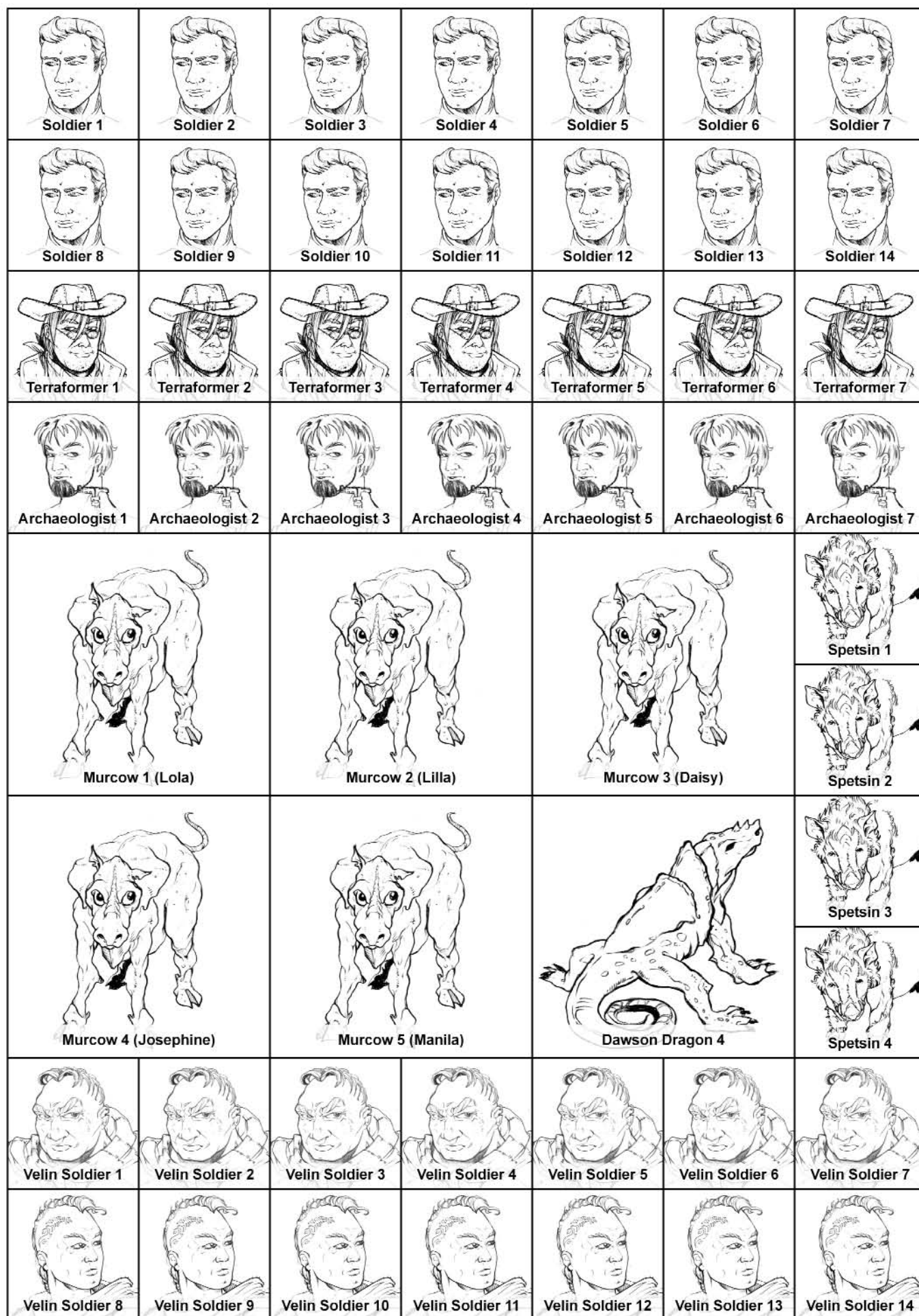
spare parts with a purchase DC of 18. Gravity sensors are PL 9 devices. The purchase DC of a gravity sensor on Eos would be determined by market forces, but would be at least 46.

♦ NANITE EMERGENCY MEDICAL KIT

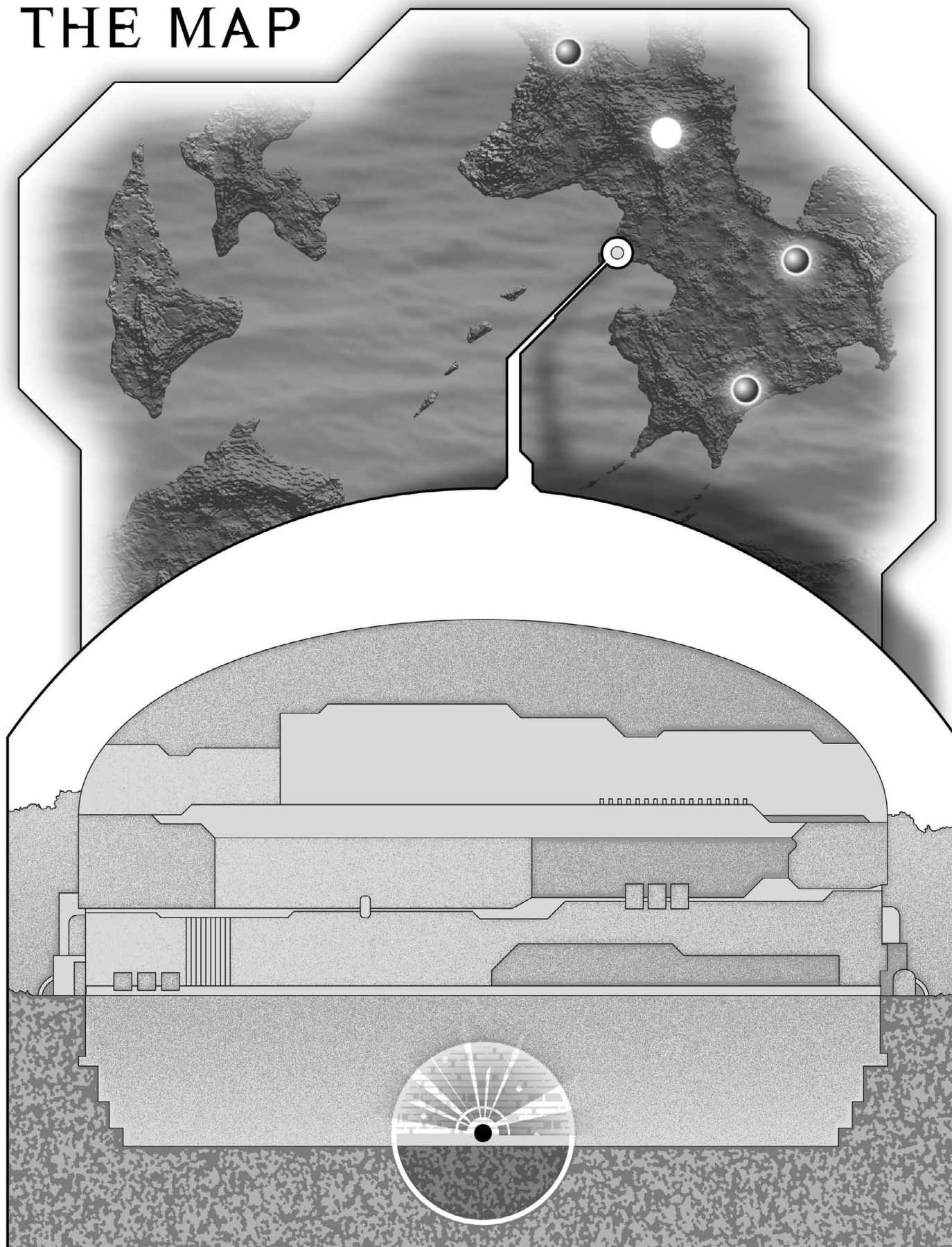
Once a common tool among emergency response teams and military medics of the Star Confederation, most nanite emergency medical kits were consumed during the war with the vaasi. These devices function by being strapped to a patient, preferably near a wound on the patient, at which point the kit automatically activates and dispenses a swarm of nanites to deal with the injuries. The process is remarkably fast and effective, but each time it is used a few nanites are lost in the process, meaning the nanite med-kit will eventually run out of nanites. Attaching a nanite med-kit requires a full round action. During the attachment process and the following round the patient cannot take any physical actions or he will disrupt the nanites, rendering the nanite med-kit ineffective. Assuming the patient stays put at the end of the round after the nanite med-kit was attached, the patient is healed 2d8+6 hit points. These devices generally have twenty charges when full, but the one the PCs find only has 4. A nanite med-kit weighs 3 pounds. The purchase DC of a nanite emergency medical kit on Eos would be determined by market forces, but would be at least 44.







THE MAP



- 1: BARRACKS
- 2: MACHINEGUN POSTS
- 3: RESEARCH ROOM
- 4: SUPPLY HUT
- 5: G-3 SURVEY VEHICLES

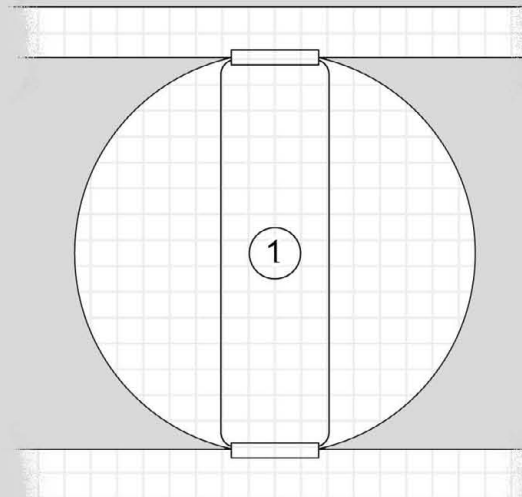
□ : 5 Feet



CHAPTER 3: ENCOUNTER 2 DIRTDIGGER TOWN

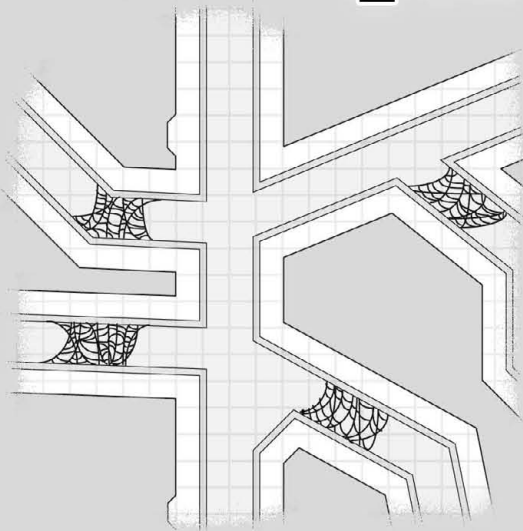
- 1: GENERATOR DEVICE

□ : 10 Feet



CHAPTER 3: ENCOUNTER 3A BLACK WHEEL GANG

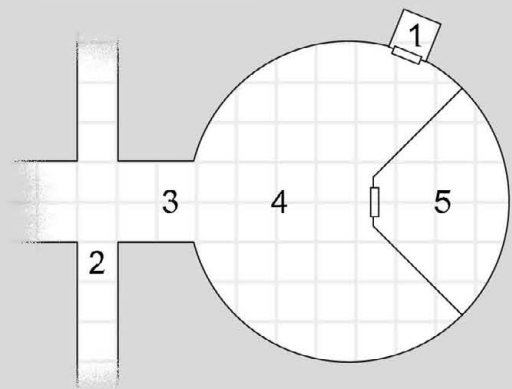
□ : 20 Feet



CHAPTER 3: ENCOUNTER 3B SPITTER SPIDERS

- 1: EXIT ELEVATOR
- 2: PC STARTING POSITION
- 3: AUTOMATED DISINTEGRATOR RIFLES
- 4: WATCHMAN'S 3 ROOM
- 5: ARTIFICIAL SINGULARITY STORAGE ROOM

□ : 20 Feet



CHAPTER 3: ENCOUNTERS 5-7

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AN ADVENTURE BY LEE HAMMOCK

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