An Adventure Sourcebook for

DragonMech™

Rumors & Lies

⚔ by Michael Hammes & Philip Reed ⚔

Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons Player s Handbook, published by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. This product utilizes updated material from the v3.5 revision.

DragonMech
Rumors & Lies
by Michael Hammes & Philip Reed

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Introduction

IN THE DEEPEST LEVELS OF THE LARGEST CITY-MECHS, IN THE DARKEST TAVERNS IN THE CITIES OF HIGHPOINT, AND IN THE BLACKEST ALLEYS OF THE MOST DANGEROUS PLACES, RUMORS ARE WHISPERED. ADVENTURERS, THIEVES, GUARDS, NOBLES, BEGGARS, AND MERCHANTS ALL RELY ON INFORMATION AND SPREAD WHAT THEY HEAR — TRUE OR FALSE. IT IS ONLY THE UNWISE — OR UNLUCKY — THAT DO NOT SEEK OUT INFORMATION AND USE IT TO THEIR ADVANTAGE. IN THE RAVAGED WORLD OF **DRAGONMECH**, RUMORS AND LIES ABOUND.

Rumors & Lies is Ronin Arts' first official PDF supplement for Goodman Games' **DragonMech** setting. Within the pages of this PDF, written for the use of DMs, are an assortment of rumors that can be used as springboards to adventure. Additionally, each rumor includes information that a DM can use either in adventures related to the rumor or in adventures of his own design. New monsters, items, and rules are scattered throughout the pages of this PDF. See the table of contents on p. 3 for a thorough listing.

Using The Rumors

This PDF is intended solely for the DM. Players who suspect that their DM may have a copy of this PDF would do best to close this file now and find something else to peruse.

The rumors in this PDF may be sprinkled liberally in a campaign either as written or modified by the DM. DMs should always be prepared for the situations, characters, and locations discussed in any rumor to leap to the forefront of the game session; you never know what bit of information the players will grab and run with.

When in any tavern, inn, coffeehouse, or similar establishment where men and women gather, select a rumor (or two or three) from this PDF and have each player make a *Gather Information* check and then check the roll against the chosen rumor(s).

I've discovered that these rumors work especially well if, after the *Gather Information* check is rolled, you give the PCs first the failed result (even if they made their roll) and then, shortly after, give them the successful result. This adds some roleplaying opportunities and, I've found, encourages the PCs to talk over the false rumor before discovering the truth.

Each rumor follows the format:

Rumor Heading
(Gather Information DC in Gear)

Setup: Suggested setup information.

Failed *Gather Information* Check: If the check is failed this is what the PCs hear. A section of this entry is to be read aloud to the players though many DMs will choose to paraphrase the information (especially if any of it needs to be tweaked to better fit the campaign). This entry also discloses the source of the rumor.

Successful *Gather Information* Check: If the check succeeds this is what the PCs hear. Again, this entry is intended to be read aloud and gives the source of the rumor.

Follow Up: If the PCs choose to investigate the rumor this information will help the DM to prepare for what could happen.

The Lunar Rains are Changing Creatures

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Setup: The adventurers hear whispered tales that the lunar rains are altering the native creatures of Highpoint. If they choose to pursue the rumors and go in search of the truth, they may very well learn the following.

Failed *Gather Information* Check: "Converted, you say? My dear sir, the notion is preposterous! I have heard from many a man such as yourself, an 'adventurer' if you will, that the rumors of creatures from our own world being transformed by the rains is mere rumor and gossip amongst the lower classes and the stupid. I assure you that there is no more truth to these tales than there is weight to the stories that Parilus shall return."

Source: Spider Bryce **[male human, Exp 4, hp 8],** a merchant from Edge. Spider is a tall man, balding, and some forty floodings of age. He dresses in fine clothing, often Phyrgian cap and black tunic. Spider travels from city to city (and city-mech to city-mech) to trade his candles and soaps for any coin or items of value that he can sell in Edge.

Successful *Gather Information* Check: "I 'eard what that bald fool told you boys and I can guarantee that he knows not of which he speaks. I've watched those damned rains transform beasts right before my eyes, taking my own horse and creating some foul, monstrous abomination in mere moments. Poor Swift. I had to kill him myself afore he had the chance to eat me and my clients."

Source: Kate Lehmann-Haupt **[female human, Stalker 5, hp 24],** a good-looking stalker that offers her services to any that can afford her. Kate's dark, black hair and deep, tan complexion are a direct contrast to the bright white and yellow cloak, tunic, and breeches she chooses to wear. Kate spends most of her time in the Endless Plains and has also spent many months in the Roughlands, so she does have a significant degree of knowledge when it comes to the wild areas of Highpoint.

Follow Up: While there isn't much to follow up with the player characters, if they've succeeded their Gather Information check they will know of the existence of these beasts and have an idea of what to watch for. Any player character that learns of the existence of creatures converted by lunar rains gains a +2 circumstance bonus to all Knowledge (nature) checks when dealing with lunar-cursed creatures (including identifying them in the field).

Lunar-Cursed

Introduction

As the lunar gods continue to battle the terrestrial gods and increase their influence over Highpoint, their predations occasionally spill from the realm of the divine into that of the mortal and mundane. The first sign of this growing influence of the lunar gods on the terrestrial world is the sporadic appearance of lunar-cursed creatures upon Highpoint.

The Lunar-Cursed

A lunar-cursed creature is a terrestrial creature that has gotten caught in a wash of divine lunar energy escaping from the realms beyond. These washes currently occur only during the lunar

rains, when the power of the lunar gods to influence Highpoint is strongest, and only appear to affect simple-minded creatures (i.e. animals with an Intelligence score of 1 or 2).

Mercifully these washes are brief, being effectively instantaneous, and affect only a limited area (usually no more than a hundred foot radius); however, as the power of the lunar gods grows, it is very likely that these washes will begin to grow more powerful and remain for longer, slowly changing the very essence of Highpoint to that desired by its lunar invaders.

Creatures caught in such a lunar wash acquire the lunar-cursed template (see below), becoming lunar creatures in both physiology and psychology. The DM should assume that such lunar-cursed creatures act much like lunar dragons, wandering aimlessly and destroying whatever they encounter (for more information on lunar creatures see Goodman Games' **DragonMech** rulebook p. 181).

Whether this effect is reversible (something likely only if the terrestrial gods manage to defeat the lunar gods or at least manage to reduce their influence from current levels) is unknown at this time.

Appearance Changes

A lunar-cursed creature's blood vessels grow abnormally large, becoming ribbed or corrugated and undulating disturbingly beneath its skin. The blood of a lunar-cursed creature turns a creamy, semitranslucent white in color and takes on an oily consistency; when cut, the blood of a lunar-cursed creature never sprays but oozes.

Creating A Lunar-Cursed Creature

"Lunar-cursed" is an acquired template that can be added to any terrestrial animal with an Intelligence score of 1 or 2 (referred to hereafter as the "base creature").

A lunar-cursed uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Special Qualities: A lunar creature retains all the special qualities of the base creature and also gains the following qualities.

Lunar (Ex): A lunar creatures take only half damage from most elemental attacks (air, fire, and water) and takes no damage against such elemental attacks on a successful save. A lunar creature takes double damage from all earth-based attacks and magic (such as spells with the Earth descriptor). A lunar creature receives a +10 bonus to saves against mind-influencing effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects), mind blasts and psionic attacks, and *detect thoughts* due to its alien psychology.

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +1.

Sample Lunar-cursed

This example uses a mountain lion as the base creature.

There is something odd about this mountain lion. Not only is it approaching you without any sort of fear or reluctance, you also notice that its skin appears to bulge and pulse in several places.

Lunar-cursed mountain lion: CR 3; Medium animal (lunar); HD 3d8+6; hp 19; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +2, Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d6+3, bite); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+3, bite) and 2 claws +1 melee (1d3+1); Space/Reach 5ft./5ft.; SA Improved grab, pounce, rake 1d3+1; SQ Low-light vision, lunar, scent; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 19, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Balance +12, Climb +11, Hide +8*, Jump +11, Listen +6, Move Silently +8, Spot +6; Alertness, Weapon Finesse.

An Ancient Dungeon Has Been Discovered

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Setup: Shortly after entering a city-mech the player characters are approached by a man offering to sell them information about a "lost" dungeon. If they pay the man the 20 gold he requests, he gives them a map and tells them that the dungeon was recently revealed when a meteor strike sheared the side off of a large mountain in the Boundary Peaks. If they decide to spend some time investigating the map – and rumored dungeon – before setting off on an expedition, they may learn the following.

Failed *Gather Information* Check: "You're talking about the Dungeon of Chalvor, I assume. My pap used to spend nights at the tavern telling us about his escape from that dungeon. He said that was back before the lunar rains, but he weren't *that* old. A group set off in search of the dungeon from here several years ago, but I don't know what became of them. The dungeon exists, that's for sure. I heard someone on the upper levels has a map to the dungeon. Have you tried checking with him for information?"

Source: Jacob **[male human, Commoner 1, hp 2],** a young man of 17 with short, brown hair and a constant grin. Jacob is quite smart but poor and gets by working odd jobs aboard the city-mech for anyone that will have him. He can frequently be found in the marketplace working for any number of different merchants – it's almost as if he knows them all.

Successful *Gather Information* Check: "You bought that scrap of trash? Yes, there's a dungeon somewhere out there in the Boundary Peaks but I can promise you that Collector – he's the one that stole your gold and gave you that garbage – has no idea where it is." The man's voice becomes subdued, conspiratorial. "But,

there's a wizard hiding beneath the docking bay that knows the truth about the Dungeon of Chalvor. I'll guide you to him . . . for a small fee, of course."

If the player character's pay the man 10 or more gold he leads them to the dirtiest levels of the city-mech and directs them to a small, hidden room in which the wizard is said to live. He then thanks them for the pay and sets off to return to the upper levels.

The wizard, calling himself Grease **[male human, wizard 15, hp 39],** gives the player characters a map that is almost identical to the one they already possess. This map, the wizard claims, is accurate.

Source: Josef Gaarti **[male human, Expert 3, hp 7],** a man in his 30s who works as a messenger and skilled laborer. The man thinks rather highly of himself and constantly puts down and threatens those around him, but if confronted he reveals himself to be a coward; Josef will promise anything to avoid injury.

Follow Up: If the player characters choose to journey to the site of the dungeon the DM will need a dungeon complex. We've included a map (see p. 10) for a possible dungeon complex but it will be the DM's job to stock the map to suit his players and campaign. If you need a dungeon that's completely ready for use you may want to give Goodman Games' ***Dungeon Crawl Classics*** line a try. Check the Goodman Games website – **www.goodmangames.com** – for information on the series.

For those that wish to create their own dungeon, we've included a new monster to populate the dungeon with. See the next page.
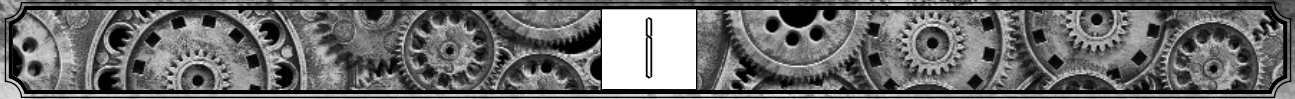
Uskcharothmosi (Lunar Spider)

Medium Aberration (Lunar)

Hit Dice:	6d8+12 (39 hp)
Initiative:	+4
Speed:	40 ft. (8 squares), climb 40 ft.
Armor Class:	17 (+4 Dex, +3 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 13
Base Attack/Grapple:	+4/+6
Attack:	Bite +8 melee (1d6+2 plus paralysis)
Full Attack:	Bite +8 melee (1d6+2 plus paralysis) and 2 claws +3 melee (1d4+1)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Paralysis, pounce, web
Special Qualities:	Damage reduction 5/piercing or slashing, darkvision 120 ft., lunar, tremorsense
Saves:	Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +7
Abilities:	Str 14, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 15, Cha 8
Skills:	Climb +13, Craft (trapmaking) +4, Hide +10*, Move Silently +10*, Spot +8
Feats:	Multiattack, Weapon Finesse (bite)
Environment:	Underground or lunar
Organization:	Solitary, colony (2-8), infestation (9-28)
Challenge Rating:	5
Treasure:	Standard
Alignment:	Usually lawful evil
Advancement:	7–9 HD (Medium); 10–15 HD (Large)
Level Adjustment:	-

Uskcharothmosi appear as thickset spider-like creatures (hence the name lunar spider).

Their bodies and heads are massive blobs of corrugated and rubbery sickly-gray flesh, which sit on three pairs of spindly legs that are coved with thousands of bristly hairs and look like they could never support the creatures' weight. Despite their awkward appearance, uskcharothmosi are surprisingly swift and nimble.

An uskcharothmosi's front pair of legs is noticeably shorter than the hind two pairs and each leg ends in a pair of clawed 'fingers'. These fingers are used in combat, to manipulate objects (clumsy manipulation at best), and to throw their webs. The other two pairs of legs end in spider-like feet and it is these that the uskcharothmosi relies on for movement.

Unlike many other lunar creatures, uskcharothmosi prefer to create communal lairs. These they surround with their webs for protection and use as a base to sortie from when in search of food.

A typical uskcharothmosi's body is 6 feet long and the creature weighs about 400 pounds.

COMBAT

Uskcharothmosi prefer to lie in ambush for their prey, waiting for it to stumble into a net or

otherwise be distracted and then rush from their hiding place. Once in combat uskcharothmosi rely on their paralyzing bite to freeze as many opponents as possible. Only when all opponents are paralyzed or dead do uskcharothmosi carry off their prey.

Uskcharothmosi Silk

The silk that the uskcharothmosi use to weave their webs is quite sturdy and can be used to fashion superior rope.

A typical 50' length of uskcharothmosi silk rope has 6 hit points and can be burst with a DC 26 Strength check. It is so supple that it provides a +2 circumstance bonus on Use Rope checks. It costs 25 gp and weighs 6 lbs.

Lunar (Ex): An uskcharothmosi takes only half damage from most elemental attacks (air, fire, and water) and takes no damage against such elemental attacks on a successful save. An uskcharothmosi takes double damage from all earth-based attacks and magic (such as spells with the Earth descriptor). An uskcharothmosi receives a +10 bonus to saves against mind-influencing effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects), mind blasts and psionic attacks, and *detect thoughts* due to its alien psychology.

Paralysis (Ex): An uskcharothmosi secretes anesthetizing saliva. A target hit by the uskcharothmosi's bite attack must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 2d4 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Pounce (Ex): If an uskcharothmosi charges a foe, it can make a full attack.

Tremorsense (Ex): An uskcharothmosi can detect and pinpoint any creature or object within 60 feet in contact with the ground, or within any range in contact with the uskcharothmosi's webs.

Web (Ex): An uskcharothmosi can throw a web six times per day. This is similar to an attack with a net but has a maximum range of 50 feet, with a range increment of 10 feet, and is effective against targets of up to Medium size. The web anchors the target in place, allowing no movement.

An entangled creature can escape with a DC 15 Escape Artist check or burst the web with a DC 23 Strength check. The check DCs are Constitution-based, and the Strength check DC includes a +8 racial bonus. The web has 12 hit points, hardness 0, and takes double damage from acid but only half damage from fire.

Uskcharothmosi can also create sheets of sticky webbing from 5 to 60 feet square. They usually position these to snare flying creatures but can also try to trap prey on the ground. Approaching creatures must succeed on a DC 20 Spot check to notice a web, or they stumble into it and become trapped as though by a successful web attack. Attempts to escape or burst the webbing receive a +5 bonus if the trapped creature has something to walk on or grab while pulling free. Each 5-foot-square section has 12 hit points, hardness 0, and takes double damage from acid but only half damage from fire.

An uskcharothmosi can move across its own sheet web at its climb speed and can determine the exact location of any creature touching the web.

Skills: Uskcharothmosi have a +4 racial bonus on Craft (trapmaking), Hide, Move Silently, and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. An uskcharothmosi can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened. An uskcharothmosi uses its Dexterity modifier for Climb checks.

*Uskcharothmosi have a +8 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks when using their webs.

Saves: In addition to an aberration's good Will save, uskcharothmosi also have good Reflex saves.
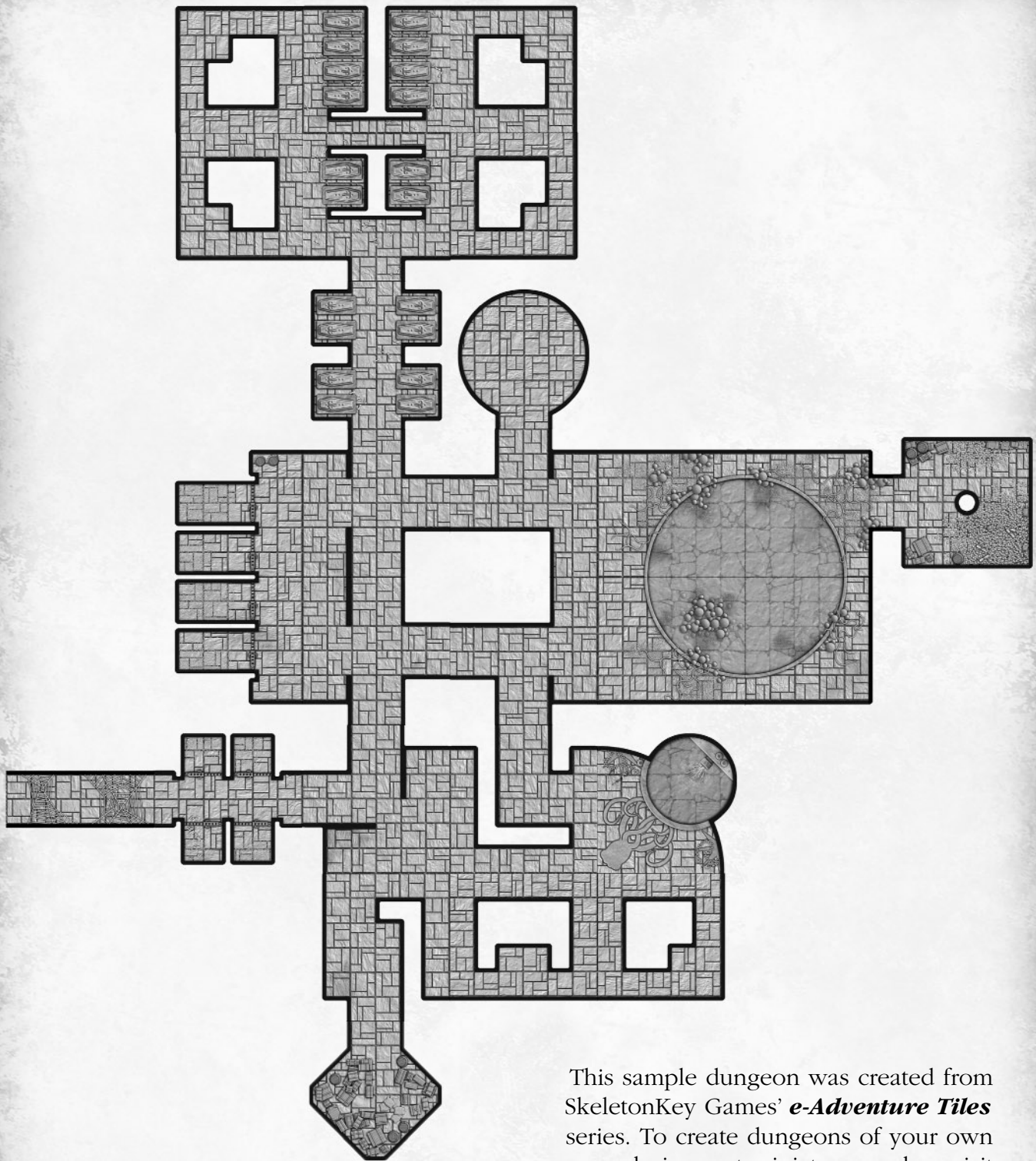
This sample dungeon was created from SkeletonKey Games' *e-Adventure Tiles* series. To create dungeons of your own design – at miniatures scale – visit SkeletonKey Games' website at **www.skeletonkeygames.com.**

Map artwork © Ed Bourelle, used with permission.

That Lunite is Some Valuable Stuff

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Setup: The player characters are in a marketplace in search of new equipment when they overhear a merchant offering a large number of gold pieces for a special type of metal he calls lunite. Before they can get to the merchant to inquire about the metal he is lost in a crowd of people. Asking around about lunite, the player characters are likely to learn the following.

Failed *Gather Information* Check: "Lunite? Someone's been feedin' you a line, boy." Maniacal laughter. "Sounds like a good lie to get ya to buy some worthless scrap of iron. I wouldna be takin' any "lunite" if I was you, boy. The only 'lunar metal' that means a damn is mensite!" (See the ***DragonMech*** rulebook, p. 140.) Glances left, and then right. "You have a copper for a poor ole lady, boy?"

If the player characters give the woman a copper, she'll thank them and go back to her business (which appears to be begging).

Source: Hattie **[female human, Commoner 1, hp 1],** an old woman that spends her time begging. She's a constant source of inaccurate information. Anyone that gives her a coin is an instant friend that she'll seek out anytime she has "valuable" information.

Successful *Gather Information* Check: "Yes, there actually is lunite. It comes down during the lunar rains, hidden within the largest meteorites and fragments that pound the earth at night. Some say they've found the pure metal in small, fist-sized chunks, but those that say that are liars. I've heard many a craftsman say that he'll pay a handsome sum for pure lunite."

Source: Morgan Haimar **[male elf, clockwork ranger 8, hp 48],** a tall, fair-skinned elf wearing a dark gray cloak and mithral chainmail. Haimar works as an agent-for-hire, hiring himself out as a tracker, guide, or bodyguard. He's currently between jobs and is concentrating more on spending the spoils of a recent expedition than he is searching for work. Haimar's animal companion is a monstrous spider.

Follow Up: If the player characters choose to set off on a mining expedition they'll need to watch the skies for a large meteorite since – according to those who know – lunite is only found in the largest of meteorites that hit the earth. A successful DC 20 Gather Information check points them toward a large meteorite that recently crashed in Stenian Confederacy territory. Though the meteorite was destroyed by Stenian mechs, there is a chance that some sizable fragments containing lunite could be found in the area. (**Note:** If the player characters have played through ***Shardsfall Quest,*** the first ***DragonMech*** adventure by Goodman Games, they'll already know about this particular meteorite.) It should take roughly 2d4+1 days after they begin their search before a suitable meteorite strikes close to the player characters.

If they prefer to leave metal prospecting and mining to the experts, the player characters could once again encounter lunite as either a treasure item or special piece of equipment that they may purchase.

Lunite Qualities

Only after it has been extracted from its ore and properly forged (a process requiring cold forging much like cold iron) does lunite reveal its properties.

Forged lunite of at least one pound in mass (weight) always sheds light equivalent to a *light* spell (bright light in a 20-foot radius, shadowy light in a 40-foot radius); lunite items of less mass than one pound shed only as much light as a candle (no bright illumination and shadowy illumination in a 5-foot radius). The light cannot be shut off. A weapon, armor, or other item made from lunite cannot be concealed when uncovered or drawn.

In addition to this light-generating quality, lunite has some form of bond with creatures of lunar origin and is capable of detecting the presence of lunar creatures. Any time a creature of lunar origin comes within a 30-foot radius of forged lunite (this must be at least a one pound mass as anything less does not detect the presence of lunar creatures), the metal glows even more brightly, shedding light equivalent to a *daylight* spell (bright light in a 60-foot radius, shadowy light in a 120-foot radius) until the creature is out of range once again. At the DM's option, lunar creatures may be able to avoid detection by succeeding at a Will save (DC 15) with success indicating that the lunar creature is able to mask its origins from the lunite.

Beyond these properties, forged lunite is exactly like steel in its ability to be used for weapons, armor, and other items; it confers no special advantages or imposes any special disadvantages to such items.

Due to scarcity, any item, weapon, or armor made from lunite costs ten times as much as its normal counterpart. This increase in cost is strictly due to supply and demand; masterwork and enchantment costs for items made from lunite are not affected. Items without metal parts cannot be made from lunite.

Damage Reduction

In addition to the qualities already listed, at the DM's discretion lunite can be a metal that bypasses the damage reduction of certain lunar powerful creatures much like other special materials, such as adamantine or cold iron, do.

For example, much like a devil may have damage reduction to every kind of weapon except one that is both good and silver, so a lunar dragon might have damage reduction to every sort of weapon except for one forged from lunite.

Including this idea of damage reduction gives the DM a way to make lunar creatures more powerful without having to alter their basic statistics. For example, a particularly powerful lunar dragon might have damage reduction 20/lunite, making it virtually impervious to any weapons individuals on Highpoint possess and even rendering mech weapons relatively ineffective unless they are made of lunite.

Common Lunite Items

The most common lunite items by far are lunite lanterns. These items are usually crafted to appear exactly like normal lanterns except that they generate their own light at all times and thus never burn out or require refueling. Lunite lanterns are especially prized on city-mechs as they not only provide unending and pollution-free light, but can also be used to warn of the presence of lunar creatures.

Those that battle lunar creatures also value lunite weapons and armor. Such arms and armor are especially prized by the clerics and paladins of the terrestrial gods who not only value the metal's detection qualities but also see the constant light as a fitting symbol for their on-going struggle against the lunar gods and their servants.
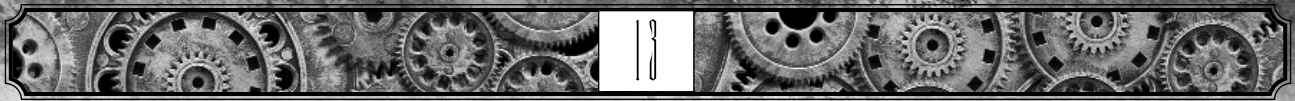
A Lost City Has Been Rediscovered

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Setup: Sitting in a crowded pub or tavern one night the adventurers hear tales of a lost city that has been recently rediscovered near the Boundary peaks. Amazingly, the stories tell of a surface city that has survived the lunar rains unscathed. If they look deeper into the matter, the player characters are likely to learn the following.

Failed *Gather Information* Check: "I've heard of the city – Platia is the name of it. It's somewhere in the northern area of the Boundary peaks and, I hear, there's an old trail that leads through the rocky terrain that was recently widened and cleared so that mechs could use it. I don't know how the city survived but it did. They say the streets are made of gold and all of the treasures of the past were hidden in the city. I think it's a wizard that saved the city."

Source: Harland Micajah **[male human, Fighter 3, hp 21],** a towering black man, almost six and a half feet tall with massive shoulders and thick, powerful arms and legs. Harland is a freelance adventurer that often works with a group out of Glatek. Harland is reluctant to say too much since his crew is planning to explore the city themselves.

Successful *Gather Information* Check: "Platia is what 'cher talkin' about, lad. Survived the rains unharmed? Not bloody likely. Platia is a decimated wasteland on the surface, just like everything else around us. The survivors live underground like a lot of those fools without a city-mech to call home. I hear there's some good treasures up there in Platia – those idiots don't even know what they've got. I've half a mind to go there myself and swindle those fools out of the good stuff."

Source: Grunnar the Grimy **[male dwarf, Expert 2, hp 5],** a filthy dwarf that makes his living fixing broken machinery (some say that his business exists because he sneaks in and breaks machinery and then offers to fix it for a lower rate than his competitors). Grunnar is commonly found drunk outside the nearest tavern or hurrying on his way to a job. Checking around indicates that the dwarf doesn't have many friends.

Follow Up: Locating Platia is a difficult task for any that have never been there. If the player characters attempt to find the ruined city they'll have an adventure ahead of them. Many conmen and thieves will offer to sell maps to Platia but finding an accurate map should take several weeks of game time. Once the player characters reach the city they find that it is largely destroyed, housing only a few hundred people, and as poor as it is dirty. Nevertheless, there are some items of value to be found in the city – see below for a brief history of Platia and the treasures that are held, often unknowingly, by its remaining residents.

History Of Platia

Platia and its surrounding lands had already been isolated for several centuries prior to the coming lunar rains. Able to produce everything that was needed for its population and governed by a council that focused on building a peaceful, self-contained society, Platia had little contact with the outside world except for the occasional traveler or tradesman that happened by.

Then, some four hundred years before the coming of the lunar rains, after suffering through a plague whose origins were eventually traced to a traveling merchant, the city council completely closed off Platia to all outsiders on penalty of death. With this edict strictly enforced, what little trade and contact there had been with the outside world ceased and, within two generations, Platia had passed from memory.

Through careful management of its resources and a program of stringent population control, Platia spent the centuries until the coming of the lunar rains in peace and relative prosperity. Although innovation and curiosity were discouraged by a strictly enforced set of laws that regulated almost every aspect of life, from the crafting of goods to the planting of fields to one's place in society, these same laws guaranteed specific rights, freedoms, and certainties to every citizen of Platia. Thus, while no Platian could rise, neither could they fall and so life in Platia changed not at all in over four centuries. Then came the lunar rains.

In less than a generation, Platia was decimated. While the destruction of the city was not any more severe than that faced by scores of other surface cities, the residents of Platia were uniquely unprepared to deal with this catastrophe. Whereas a resident of Rook or Lebra might mourn the destruction of her city, she knew that there were other cities and other places to go, but for the Platians, their city was their entire world; paralyzed by their own ignorance, they could do nothing but cling to their crumbling city.

The laws that had guided Platia through centuries of stability had no answer to the unending lunar rains and the predations of lunar dragons and, as the houses of Platia were pounded down, so was its civilization. Order and law gave way to chaos and anarchy. Many Platians succumbed to madness and despair, often taking their own lives or those of others, and those that escaped this fate could do little more than merely struggle to survive.

Platia In The Present

The residents of Platia today are nothing like their forefathers. Beaten down by the decades of destruction, the Platians are a small, fragmented, and despondent people that exist only because the innate will to live is stronger than the desire to die; none but the oldest Platians even have an inkling of their history.

As a result, most Platians go through life with a fatalistic attitude and an expectation that things are only going to get worse. Even the recent appearance of outsiders and the massive machines they bring with them, rather than being seen as signs of hope, are viewed by the Platians as yet one more sign of how far their civilization has fallen and how little control they have of their lives.

Platia is an open city rife for conquest and domination and it is hard not to notice this within a few moments of arriving within the city. Already opportunistic traders, petty warlords, ruthless outlaws, and merciless slavers mingle in the ruins of Platia, grabbing who and what they can while the demoralized Platians simply stand by and watch, too despondent to put up any resistance.

Treasures Of Platia

The Platians value little beyond what they need to remain alive (i.e. food, shelter, wood for fires, etc.). This, combined with their defeatist mindset (many literally believe that they deserve to be robbed and taken advan-

tage of while others just don't care) makes them and their city prime targets for exploitation by those with little qualms about taking advantage of others.

So what is there to exploit in all of the rubble? Are there mountains of gems and magic lying in hidden caches? Are the streets really made of gold? Well, no, at least not in the literal sense. But for those with a head for business, there is plenty of opportunity to be found among the ruins of Platia.

Valuable Metals

Given the isolation of Platia there isn't a lot of valuable metal to be had. In fact, prior to the lunar rains the economy of Platia worked on a highly regulated barter system based on loaves of bread (i.e. one sheep is equal to 200 loaves of bread, etc.). As a result, gold and other precious metals had no actual economic value (they still don't; any trading with the Platians is done on a barter system). However, this does not mean that there aren't any precious metals available.

As everywhere, there was gold, silver, copper, and even some platinum in the city before its self-imposed isolation. Having no economic value, the Platians used these metals in works of art (chiefly jewelry) or just collected them (much like someone might collect figurines or interesting rocks). Thus, while there are no great treasure piles to be found, the precious metals that are there have been ignored by the Platians and are otherwise unguarded.

Gems

Like all peoples, the Platians appreciated the beauty of gems and gemstones did have value in Platian society.

Chief among the Platian gemstones was jade, which was locally mined from a large deposit nearby (although largely played out even before the coming of the lunar rains, there is still some jade in the mine to be found by those willing to look). So large was the quantity of jade relative to the city's population that virtually everyone, from the wealthiest to the poorest, wore it as an ornamental stone in everything from earrings to necklaces to bracelets. Even today Platians still wear a significant amount of jade, although this is more so out of habit and tradition than actually valuing it.

Other kinds of gemstones were also in use and can be found by those willing to look in the rubble or don't mind robbing graves, however none come anywhere close to jade in terms of abundance, especially after the city began its centuries of isolation.

Art

One of the few ways of expressing individuality and imagination in Platian society was through artwork; rare was the citizen of Platia that was not skilled in some form of art (i.e. oratory, drama, sculpture, mosaics, etc.).

Because of this, during its heyday the city was filled with artistic treasures of every kind, both big and small. Many of these artistic treasures, especially the large statues that could be found on almost every street corner, were destroyed during the lunar rains. But considering how literally every nook and cranny of every home featured art, there are still plenty of artistic treasures to be found.

From intact wall and floor mosaics to life-like sculptures, detailed paintings to ornate oil lamps, fine rugs to highly decorated furnishings; those that sift through the rubble carefully have little trouble unearthing some small treasure. Then there are the basements.

Many Platian families stored less successful or popular pieces in their basements (to destroy anything artistic was considered morally reprehensible). These pieces, while poor by Platian standards of the time, were still very good by Highpoint standards, and that was before the lunar rains. Today, with the destruction of so much, even common pieces of Platian art command masterwork prices in the markets of the

city-mechs and the few cities with people wealthy enough to be able to afford them.

Base Metals

A metal that Platia does have in abundance is iron; there is a significant deposit of iron ore just outside of the city. The Platians did use iron for forging farm tools, in artwork, and the making of arms, but never in any truly significant amounts; there was only one small mine tapping the deposit and that hasn't been used, except as a refuge from the lunar rains and dragons, in almost a century. With the ever-increasing demand for metal on Highpoint this largely untapped resource is arguably the most valuable commodity possessed by Platia.

There are also deposits of copper, nickel, and zinc in the immediate area, also largely untapped. These deposits are significantly smaller than the iron deposit but they are valuable nonetheless.

Magic Items

Platian society as a whole had little use for magic items, especially of a military (i.e. adventuring) nature. However, Platian spellcaster did excel at crafting artistic magic items (i.e. paintings using various illusion spells, glass spheres that glow with an inner light, animated statues, etc.) and Platian clerics produced a fair share of community-focused (chiefly healing and curing) items.

People

A final resource are the Platians themselves. While their forefathers were once accomplished artists, craftsmen, and farmers, the Platians of today are little more than primitives. In the century since the coming of the lunar rains, the Platians have lost virtually all their civilization's storehouse of knowledge in their struggle merely to stay alive. As a result, the Platians have little to offer but their bodies.

Naturally, there are individuals in Platia today that realize this (it is in fact why they are there) and it is only a matter of time before a sufficiently large amount of the native Platian population finds its way into the bowels of mechs and the entire Platian civilization is truly and permanently extinguished.

Sample Platian Treasure

The following treasure is representative of what individuals searching the rubble of Platia might find. For more treasure ideas, both magical and mundane, see Ronin Arts' **101 Collection** and **A Dozen . . . Collection One**.

Platian Jewel Box

Appearance: This small wooden box is some four inches wide, two inches long, and two inches deep. Its exterior features exquisite wooden inlays of various sheaves of grain. The box's hinged lid has no lock. The box's inside is lined with yellow velvet upon which a number of teardrop-shaped pieces of jade lie.

Appraise Information: DC 16. This is a very fine jewel box indeed and, although it has suffered noticeable scratching due to the collapse of its owner's house, it is otherwise intact.

There are a total of 17 pieces of jade in the box. The worked form of the jade pieces suggests that they were ultimately intended for use in a larger piece.

Value: 2,840 gp (500 gp for the box, 2,340 gp for the jade).

Special Rules: None

A City-Mech Was Destroyed

25

Setup: While aboard a city-mech word spreads quickly that another city-mech has been destroyed and most of the rumors point to a lunar dragon. Whispers spread telling tale after tale of how the giant lunar dragon attacked and completely destroyed the city-mech. The name of the destroyed city-mech is unimportant since the rumor is blatantly false; it just can't be the name of the city-mech the player characters are currently aboard. Of course, the rumor won't die down anytime soon and the player characters won't be able to escape reports like the following.

Failed *Gather Information* Check: "It's all that anyone's talkin' about. Rebirth was totally destroyed by about the biggest lunar dragon that's ever existed. They say it was at least half again as big as the city-mech and easily ripped the mech to pieces, killing everyone inside before it moved on. Some of us are gettin' ready to go out to the wreck and get whatever we can off of it before it's stripped down to a shell. They say a swarm of young lunar dragons have made a home in the burning shell so iffin you're lookin' for some work we could hire you on to help kill whatever's inside the city-mech."

Source: Halver Greenteeth **[male dwarf, Expert 3, hp 6],** a middle-aged scavenger. Halver is missing a leg and gets around with a crutch. He's been trying to save enough gold to replace his leg for a decade now, but he's prone to blowing everything he manages to scrape together on whores and ale. Halver has a reputation in the city as a dwarf who is always hatching some plan or other. Many a young adventurer has accompanied Halver on expeditions to find treasure though few ever find anything of any real value.

Successful *Gather Information* Check: "That rumor about Rebirth being destroyed? It's nothing but a rumor, completely false. Now it is true that a swarm of young lunar dragons were sighted near Rebirth about a week ago, but I'm hearing that they weren't lunar dragons at all but rather some weird new lunar creature that's as big as a man and flies. Some say that there are wizards that will pay up to 2,000 gold for the corpse of one of those creatures – something about how they're useful for spell-casting."

Source: Fra'nck Tharnaa **[male human, Fighter 12, hp 80],** a short, thick man with a heavy beard and bushy eyebrows. Tharnaa works as a bodyguard for an influential merchant and is well connected (since he spends most of his time eavesdropping rather than guarding his client). Tharnaa may have more information on the strange lunar creatures – and which wizards are offering the bounty – but it will take some gold to loosen his tongue. If the player characters pay the fighter 50 gold, he'll tell them the following:

"Smoke, a steam mage that lives down in the guts of the city, is one of the wizards I've heard is paying for those creatures. I don't know what he's doing with them but many say that he's already bought four corpses and is still looking for more."

Follow Up: Several treasure hunters and salvagers set off to locate the destroyed city-mech, intent on recovering anything of value that remains. If the player characters choose to

accompany the salvage teams, or if they set off on their own in a race to be the first to claim the wreck, they'll have an impossible time finding the destroyed city-mech (since the rumor is completely false). They will, however, encounter a flight of the strange new lunar creatures.

The player characters could also attempt to use the rumor to their advantage, perhaps by selling "maps" to the site of the destroyed city-mech or hiring themselves out as guards to protect the salvage operators (naturally demanding payment up front).

Lunar Drake

Medium Dragon (Lunar)

Hit Dice:	5d12 +15 (47 hp)
Initiative:	+2
Speed:	40 ft. (8 squares), fly 80 ft. (average)
Armor Class:	18 (+2 Dex, +6 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 16
Base Attack/Grapple:	+5/+8
Attack:	Claw +8 melee (1d6+3)
Full Attack:	2 claws +8 melee (1d6+3) and bite +6 melee (1d6+1) and 2 wings +6 melee (1d4+1)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Breath weapon
Special Qualities:	Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, lunar, scent
Saves:	Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +5
Abilities:	Str 16, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 7
Skills:	Hide +10*, Listen +13, Move Silently +10, Spot +13
Feats:	Flyby Attack, Multiattack
Environment:	Any land or lunar
Organization:	Solitary, pair, or flight (3–12)
Challenge Rating:	5
Treasure:	Standard
Alignment:	Usually chaotic evil
Advancement:	5–6 HD (Medium); 7–12 HD (Large)
Level Adjustment:	-

Lunar drakes appear as squat, toad-like creatures with four stumpy legs and fat, stubby wings. The wide mouths are filled with rows of sharp teeth, much like a shark, and their feet end in sharp claws. The skin of a lunar drake is a smoky black interlaced by a thick network of pulsing black blood vessels.

Lunar drakes prefer to travel in flights, destroying anything they encounter and then moving on without pause.

A lunar drake's body has a 6-foot girth and is about 7feet tall when the creature stands on its hind legs. It weighs about 350 pounds.

COMBAT

Lunar drakes prefer to either remain still on their perches or to fly high above the ground and out of sight of land-bound creatures, then suddenly attack by diving onto their prey.

Breath Weapon (Su): 30-foot line, once every 1d4 rounds, damage 3d10 lunar energy, Reflex save DC 15 half. The save DC is Constitution-based.

A lunar drake's breath weapon is a line of lunar energy. It looks like a burst of black lightning. No terrestrial equivalent exists, and the breath weapon bypasses all resistance to fire, cold, and other such forms; only blanket energy resistance can repel it.

Lunar (Ex): A lunar drake takes only half damage from most elemental attacks (air, fire, and water) and takes no damage against such elemental attacks on a successful save. A lunar drake takes double damage from all earth-based attacks and magic (such as spells with the Earth descriptor). A lunar drake receives a +10 bonus to saves against mind-influencing effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects), mind blasts and psionic attacks, and *detect thoughts* due to its alien psychology.

Skills: Lunar drakes have a +4 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks. *A lunar drake gains a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks in areas of shadowy illumination.

A Corpse, A Corpse, My Kingdom For A Corpse . . .

Arguably the greatest weapon possessed by lunar dragons and lunar drakes is their breath weapons. Composed of lunar energy, a type of energy that was completely unknown until the arrival of the lunar dragons upon Highpoint, such breath weapons break through all but the mightiest of protective magic and this fact has contributed not insignificantly to the lowered status that terrestrial sorcerers, wizards, and clerics find themselves having to endure.

Until the arrival of the lunar creatures the most common means of protecting oneself against any form of energy was to engage the services of a spellcaster (or to be one) and make us of abjuration magic either in the form of a spell (the most common being *protection from energy* and *resist energy*) or crafted into a magical item (which also relied mostly on the aforementioned spells); when such protections failed, those that could wield them were also seen to have failed.

Since that time, much effort has been dedicated by spellcasters towards solving the riddle of lunar energy. Unfortunately, due to the complete lack of cooperation from the lunar dragons or drakes, almost all research must be done using the corpses of these beasts (understandably most spellcasters are reluctant to take their theories straight to the field and weather a lunar dragon's breath weapon to see if they were right).

As a result, the corpses of dead lunar dragons and drakes fetch a high price; prices approaching 100 gp per Hit Die are not unknown (the DM should roll 2d4 and multiply this result by 10 and in turn multiply that by the Hit Dice of the lunar dragon or drake to come at the actual price).

What do the spellcasters do with these corpses? They dissect them, hurl magic at them, subject them to trials of fire, acid, cold, electricity, etc.; in short, they do everything they can think of to unlock the secrets behind lunar energy.

Lunar Energy

Ultimately it is up to the DM to decide whether such research efforts pay off and, if they do, when. Keeping in mind that the inability to easily protect against lunar energy has a profound impact on the current situation on Highpoint, the DM should carefully consider how to deal with this issue; there is nothing wrong with simply leaving things as they are.

That being said, for DMs wishing to tap into lunar energy as a means of expanding their campaign, here are some suggestions:

A Pound Of Flesh . . .

The DM might want to allow *protection from energy*, *resist energy,* and similar spells to ward against lunar energy as long as the spellcaster has access to the flesh of a lunar creature as a material component. The flesh must be from a lunar creature that uses lunar energy, such as a lunar dragon or a lunar drake.

The minimum amount should be a pound of flesh (enough to where weight becomes a consideration, but not so much so that a decent amount can't be carried on someone's back), but the DM may decide to require more; a good measuring stick in such an instance would be to demand a Hit Die worth of flesh (somewhere around 30 pounds; too much to really carry effectively on anything but a mech and it also makes it easy to determine how many uses one gets out of that lunar drake corpse).

Along this same line, the DM may also decide to give Highpoint spellcasters the ability to use lunar energy offensively. In this case the inclusion of the flesh of a lunar creature as a material component allows the wizard to alter the energy patterns of evocation spells (i.e. *fireball, lightning bolt*) to use lunar energy instead. All aspects of the spell remain the same, except that the spell now draws upon lunar energy instead of fire, acid, electricity, etc.

Note that these two developments could happen at different times, at the same time, or only one. Thus it is possible that Highpoint spellcasters learn how to defend against lunar energy, but not to use it. Or first learn how to employ it offensively before discovering how

Lunar Energy Vs. Other Types Of Energy

While all types of energy cause equal damage to most creatures, various types of energy deal different amounts of their normal damage to most objects (including mechs). Consult the table below for how the energy form's normal damage is affected when it is used against an object or mech:

Type of Energy	Damage to Objects (including mechs)
Acid	Full
Cold	One-quarter
Electricity	Half
Fire	Half
Lunar	Full
Sonic	Full

to defend against it (in which case those spellcasters that know how to cast a *lunar energy bolt* gain a serious advantage over those that don't).

Just Another Energy Source

In this case, Highpoint spellcasters unlock the secrets of lunar energy to the same extent as those of fire, air, water, acid, and sonic; lunar energy becomes just another energy source to be unleashed or defended against. Whether this happens after they first learn how to wield the energy using the flesh of lunar creatures as a material component, or without, is not as important as what this does to the status of lunar energy and the campaign as a whole.

Obviously, opening up the use of lunar energy to this extent will eliminate a lot of the "special" feel it has; after all, it is now just another energy source to be tapped by those with the know-how (although there may be very few of those). It is still very effective, since it continues to do full damage against objects and mechs much like acid and sonic energy do (see **Lunar Energy Vs. Other Types Of Energy** boxed text), but it is now subject to the same defenses as all other forms of energy.

But more important than the effect on combat that reducing lunar energy to just another energy type will have is the effect that being able to freely wield lunar energy will have on the attitudes of the campaign world as a whole and especially the attitudes of the peoples of Highpoint.

Some might take it to be a clear sign that the defenders of Highpoint are well be on their way to controlling, or perhaps even defeating, the lunar invasion while others might see it as a further extension of the lunar influence upon the terrestrial world (and would condemn those able to use the energy as being in league with the lunar gods, perhaps going so far as to actively hunt them down).

How would the terrestrial gods feel if their followers are suddenly able to wield the energies of their lunar nemeses? How would this affect the status of spellcasters? Certainly those that could wield lunar energy would rise in status, but what about those that could not? Would their status drop even further?

While there are great possibilities for the expansion of the campaign in allowing broader access to lunar energy, the DM should consider these and other questions carefully before doing so.

Corrupting Influence

A truly interesting twist would be to have the revelation of how to use lunar energy be a trap laid by Andakakilogitat (for more information on the Lunar God of Dragons see Goodman Games' ***DragonMech*** rulebook p. 63-64). In this case, any Highpoint spellcaster that taps into lunar energy risks acquiring the lunar-cursed template (see p. 5) and becoming a servant of the lunar gods.

A handy mechanic for this is for the DM to require a Spellcraft check (DC 15 + the level of the lunar energy spell) each time a spell is cast using lunar energy, with failure resulting in the acquisition of the template and becoming a servant of the lunar powers (the DM might want to mitigate this transformation by allowing the spellcaster a Will save against a DC of 10 + the level of the lunar energy spell and, if the save succeeds, the spellcaster does not transform).
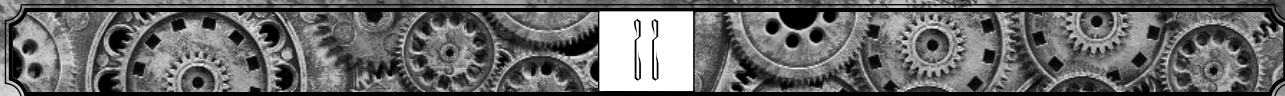
Reward Offered for Recovery of Book

Setup: While visiting a city-mech or other community the player characters see a flyer offering a reward for a book that was stolen from a Legion merchant several weeks ago. Several adventurers and common folk are plotting to uncover the thief and turn him in for the substantial reward. So many people are after the reward that the rumors have grown so quickly – and are so filled with lies – that the chances of the book being recovered decrease with every passing moment. A few rumors that the player characters may hear include the following.

Failed *Gather Information* Check: "What I heard was a steam mage stole it and run off to the south. He's goin' for a ship that's gonna take him across the ocean to his fortress. I'm lookin' for a few good people to join with me so that we can catch 'em and get the reward." Eyes the party closely, then belches. "You look like a tough enough crew to work fer me. What say you?"

Source: Nears Darksteel **[male dwarf, Fighter 3, hp 19],** a dwarf dressed in a red cloak and gearmail. Nears Darksteel is working to become a legendary warrior and takes many, many reckless and needless risks when in combat. He's already developed a reputation as a trustworthy dwarf but it is his prowess in battle that he wishes to be known for. Darksteel is prone to losing himself in brawls when he drinks too much (which is frequently).

Successful *Gather Information* Check: "Dear, that's all I'm hearing is about that book. The problem is that no one seems to know exactly what the book is. Some say it's a wizard's spellbook, packed with special spells for controlling and destroying mechs. But Father Belcharnal, he's a member of my church, has discovered that it's actually a mech construction manual. He's tasked me to find the book since the reward would do our church good. Could I possibly join you? I know the direction the thief was last seen headed in."

Source: Finnbogi Pavel **[male human, Cleric 5, hp 27],** a male human cleric (Healing and Protection domains). Pavel wears a simple supertunic and breeches and carries a small shield and heavy mace. He's a quiet, relaxed man that spends his days praying and attempting to convert others to his religion. Pavel frequently journeys with adventuring companies – both to acquire wealth for his god and to spread the message of his religion. He rarely remains with one adventuring company for more than a month or two at a time.

Follow Up: If the player characters choose to go after the thief they discover that Reynold, a wizard, and Zach, a rogue, stole the book and have plans to sell it to a sage in Edge. The exact level of the thieves depends on the needs of your campaign and, if necessary, the two have hired guards (orc guards would make an excellent guard for these two). The book includes the design specifications for the two new Legion mechs listed below.
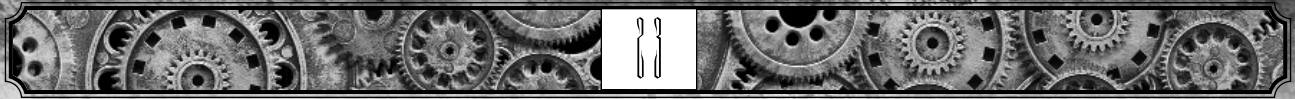
Armored Saint

Size: Colossal

Power Source: Steam

Payload Units: 20 (extra weapon mounts)

Height: 36 ft.

Space/Reach: 15 ft. by 15 ft./15 ft.

Crew: 4 (weapons: 2)

Firing Ports: 13

Hit Dice: 48

Hit Points: 264

Critical Thresholds: Green, Yellow 132, Orange 66, Red 26

Base Initiative: -1

Speed: 60 ft. (armor plating, fast legs)

Maneuverability: Average

AC: 2

Hardness: 13 (armor plating, iron, colossal)

Base Melee Attack: +2

Base Ranged Attack: -1

Unarmed Damage: 1d12+10

Trample: largest Large; safe Large; damage 4d6

Saves: Fort 0, Ref -4, Will -

Abilities: Str 30, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis -, Cha -

Mechcraft DC: 39

Base Planning Time: 78 days

Base Cost: 3,118 gp

Total Cost: 7,413 gp

Labor Requirements: 3,840 man-hours

Construction Time: 48 days (10 avg. laborers plus 1 overseers)

Special: Armor plating (+2 hardness, -10 ft. speed), extra weapon mounts (2 for 4 PU), fast legs (+20 ft.), steady feet (+4 to trip checks)

Payload Usage

PU	Use
4	Crew
16	Onboard Weapons

Onboard Weapons

Location	Arc of Fire	Weapon (Damage, Range in Ft., Other)	PU	Crew
Right Arm	Melee	Gargantuan sword blade (2d12+10/19-20 x3)	8	1
Left Arm	180° Forward	2x linked huge flame nozzles (2d8/x2, 30 ft.)	8	1

Special

Rider Platforms: In its role as an infantry support mech (see **General Information** below), the armored saint is designed specifically for carrying infantry riders into combat; the riders conserve their energy and make use of the mech's greater speed while heading to the battlefield, deploying or fighting from the mech once it arrives. To this purpose the armored saint has been outfitted with eight rider platforms (two on each leg and four on the torso).

Each platform is nothing more than a one-foot semicircular platform extending from the mech upon which the rider can sit or stand that has been outfitted with a hook at roughly waist height. The rider attaches a leather strap or chain to this hook and attaches the strap to another hook coming from his belt (all Legion riders wear a belt with such a hook).

Once connected, the rider no longer needs to make Balance checks to hold onto a mech (since the strap holds him in place) and can attack with one or both hands without any danger; if the rider can stand the mech's motion, he can even sleep while strapped to the platform.

The rider can attach himself to, or detach himself from, the strap or chain simply by removing the strap or chain from the hook on his waist. Attaching or detaching the strap is a move action that provokes an attack of opportunity.

General Information

The armored saint is destined to be the next generation of Legion infantry mech and its design is a quantum leap by Legion standards. The mech is designed to fill much the same role as the dwarven incinerator; like its dwarven counterpart, the armored saint is not designed to be deployed on its own against other mechs because it lacks enough effective anti-mech weapons.

The armored saint's purpose is two-fold: to protect Legion mechs that are vulnerable to infantry attacks and to lead Legion infantry against lunar dragons. It is for this second purpose that
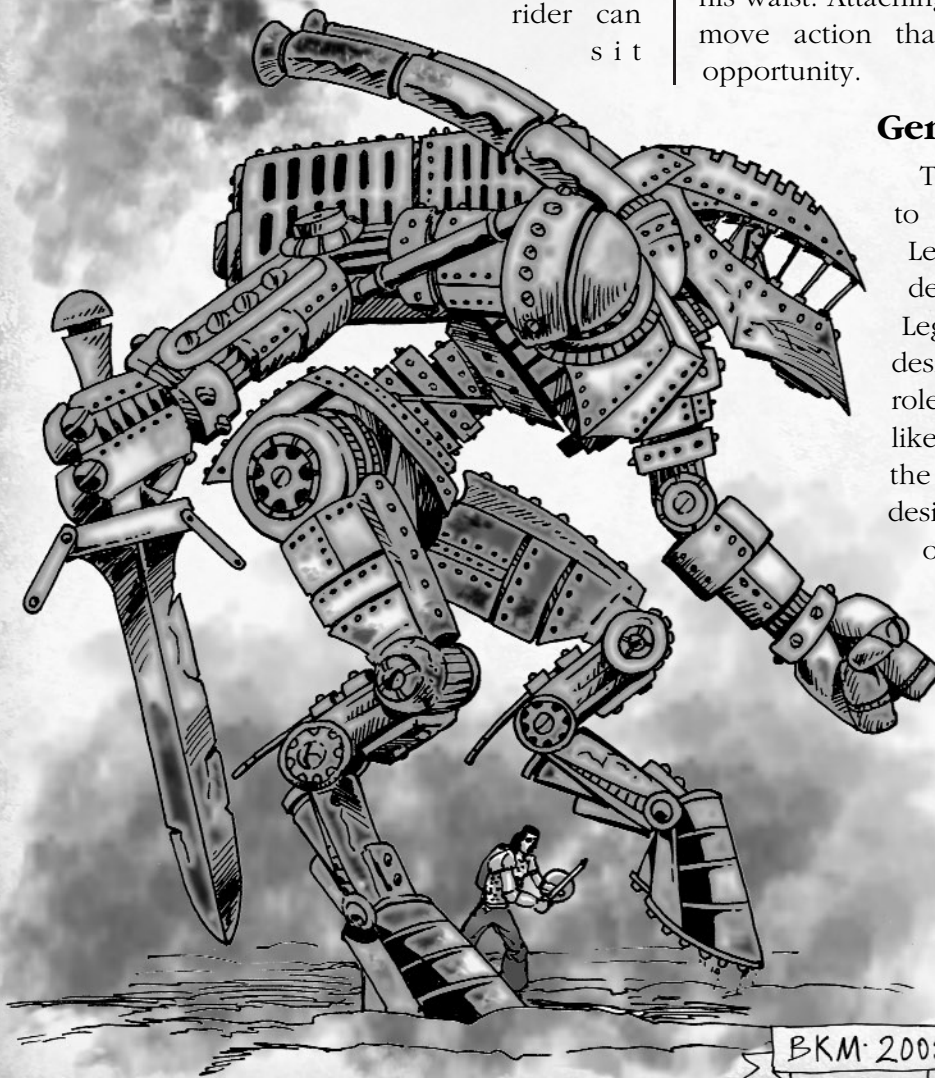
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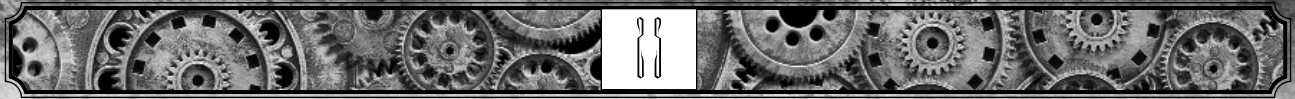
the armored saint was crafted to appear much like an armored warrior; Shar Thizdic felt that it would be more inspirational to have a mech design that resembled a human.

One interesting aspect of the armored saint's design, and one likely to be incorporated with other Legion mechs, is the fact that there is actually a surfeit of crew; even at its most basic, the mech has one more crewmember than it needs to be at full combat effectiveness. This reserve crew slot means that if one of the crewmembers of the armored saint is removed from combat, the reserve crewman can take his place; when not needed to take a fallen crewman's place, the reserve crewman is expected to fire any personal weapons or sling a bomb or two when the mech is in combat.

In place of the reserve crewman the armored saint can also take aboard a specialist. This is usually determined on a mission-by-mission basis. For example, if facing magical elven mechs, a wizard or sorcerer might occupy the position. Or, when working on covert missions or when the object is to capture enemy mechs, a stalker might occupy the position; the stalker could even deploy directly to the enemy mech once the armored saint has engaged in melee combat.

Overall, the armored saint is a solid combination of toughness, speed, and agility. Furthermore, the design shows clear evidence of having been influenced by Irontooth clan designs and, given its capabilities the armored saint would be a welcome addition to the mech devils' arsenal.

Every step of the Armored Saint reverberated through Rynsam's body. The Legion mech's pilot had picked up the pace, obviously eager to close with the crippled Stenian Incinerator, and each massive stride caused the stalker's teeth to grind and her ears to ring from the noise.

Reflexively Rynsam checked to make sure that her lanyard was still connected to the rider platform; it was. Not that she was likely to fall off. As with all stalkers her balance was superb and she was riding the platform like a sailor rode the decks of a storm-tossed ship, but it never hurt to have that extra margin of safety.

From her position on the Armored Saint's torso she could easily make out the massive silhouette of the Incinerator among the dust cloud it was churning up. It was an impressive sight. But the Stenian mech was a wounded giant, its disabled leg dredging a deep furrow into the blasted earth, and it was Rynsam's job to finish it off.

The Armored Saint's pilot maneuvered closer, being careful to keep to the Stenian mech's back in order to avoid its torso-mounted steam cannon. The Incinerator's pilot, realizing that he could not outrun his pursuer, had stopped and was slowly turning his mech around, pivoting as best as he could on his mech's mangled leg. But it was too late. Arcing his path to stay on the Incinerator's back, the Armored Saint's pilot plunged into the dust cloud. And as the Legion mech closed, Rynsom readied her grappling hook. It was time to earn her pay.
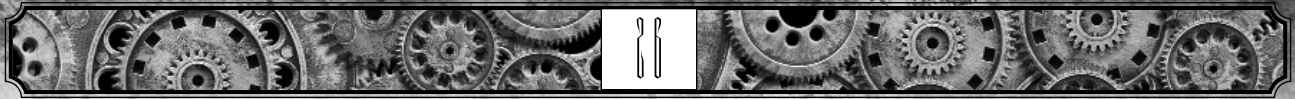
Steel Tyrant

Size: Colossal II

Power Source: Steam

Payload Units: 32

Height: 54 ft.

Space/Reach: 25 ft. by 25 ft./25 ft.

Crew: 8 (weapons: 4)

Firing Ports: 21

Hit Dice: 96

Hit Points: 528

Critical Thresholds: Green, Yellow 264, Orange 132, Red 53

Base Initiative: -2

Speed: 60 ft. (armor plating, fast legs)

Maneuverability: Average

AC: 2

Hardness: 16 (armor plating, steel, colossal II)

Base Melee Attack: +4

Base Ranged Attack: -2

Unarmed Damage: 3d6+13

Trample: largest Huge; safe Large; damage 5d6

Saves: Fort 0, Ref -4, Will -

Abilities: Str 36, Dex 6, Con -, Int -, Wis -, Cha -

Mechcraft DC: 42

Base Planning Time: 84 days

Base Cost: 5,725 gp

Total Cost: 22,587 gp

Labor Requirements: 7,680 man-hours

**Construction Time:** 96 days (10 avg. laborers plus 1 overseers)

Special: Armor plating (+2 hardness, -10 ft. speed), fast legs (+20 ft.), steady feet (+4 to trip checks)

Payload Usage

PU	Use
8	Crew
24	Onboard Weapons

Onboard Weapons

Location	Arc of Fire	Weapon (Damage, Range in Ft., Other)	PU	Crew
Mouth	180° Forward	Gargantuan steam cannon (3d10/x3, 950 ft.)	8	2
Right Arm	Melee	Gargantuan buzz saw (2d12/19-20 x3)	8	1
Left Arm	Melee	Gargantuan buzz saw (2d12/19-20 x3)	8	1
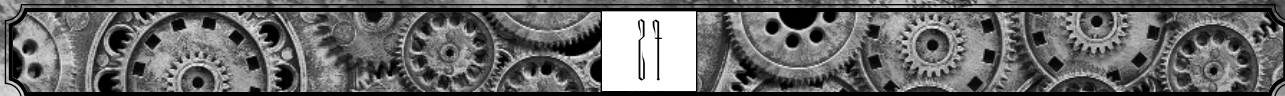
Special

Stability: The steel tyrant's tail makes it more stable than other mechs of its size. The steel tryant receives a +2 bonus to Balance and trip checks (this bonus stacks with its steady feet bonus of +4 for a total bonus of +6 to trip checks). This feature raises the base cost by 10%.

General Information

The Legion's steel tyrant design was developed at the behest of Shar Thizdic – inspired by rumors of an orc mech that resembles a giagantic lizard – who wanted to develop a main battle mech that would combine a ferocious appearance with good combat capabilities and excellent survivability. The steel tyrant is only one of several designs to have been submitted and it is currently awaiting the building of a prototype for field trials.

The strongest aspect of the steel tyrant design is its survivability; it is faster than most mechs of its size and its steel armor plating gives it the best protection the Legion can provide.

On the combat side, while the steel tyrant's steam cannon provides it with respectable ranged power, it is in melee combat that the steel tyrant is expected to excel. In fact, the entire purpose of designing the mech in the lizard design was to give it an advantage in one-on-one mech combat. When engaging another mech the steel tyrant is expected to be able to use its superior stability to trip up the other mech and, once the mech has fallen, to bring both of its buzz saws to bear on the prone mech, slicing it to ribbons in a matter of moments.

Currently, in an effort to make the steel tyrant even more effective with its trip attacks, the steel tyrant's designers are attempting to design a maneuverable tail that will allow the steel tyrant to sweep its tail at an opponent's legs, allowing the mech to knock its opponents down without risk to itself. However, they have not produced a successful design for such a tail yet.

As a result, if and when the steel tyrant will see production and what form it will ultimately take are questions that only Shar Thizdic can answer.

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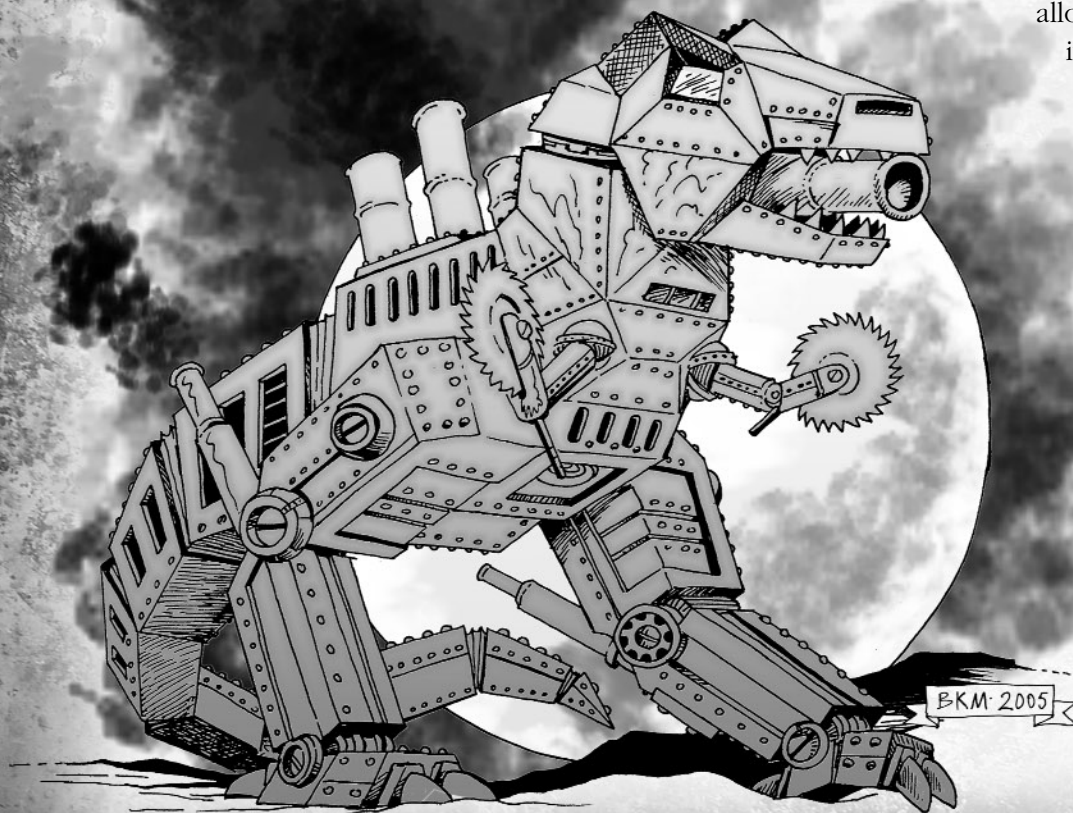
That Mech is Killing Us All

28

Setup: As the moon is rising and the adventurers are entering the protection of a small cara-vanserai or underground communi-ty, a bizarre, twisted aberration that resembles a mech crashes through the area and kills several innocent citizens, dragging off the slain bodies afterward. The lunar rains beat down particularly fiercely that night, blocking any attempts at chasing or identifying the mech. Asking around, the player characters may learn the following.

Failed *Gather Information* Check: "That were Ribaldar Grack and his Defender mech that just killed them people. Grack's a nasty half-orc steamborg that stole hisself a Defender from a Legion patrol I'd say 'bout a month ago. He's been crashing past us every few days ever since. Sometimes he stops grabs the bodies but none 'a us knows what he's doin' with the corpses. Some says he's eatin' 'em and others say he's selllin' 'em to a necromancer. I just stay out of his way."

Source: Puzzy Stonecarver **[male dwarf, Coglayer 4, hp 9],** a dwarf that lives in the city (or wherever this rumor is heard). Puzzy is short for a dwarf and spends most of his time working in his shop. He's a skilled craftsman and loves to experiment with steam equipment.

Successful *Gather Information* Check: "Yes, that was Ribalder Grack's Defender but Grack's been dead over a week now; a patrol found his broken body not too far from here. A couple of guards managed to get a good look at the Defender with a spyglass a few days ago and according to them there's something strange about the mech. You see, it wasn't smoking, which is odd considering that the Defender is a steamer. If they're right, that mech's been taken over by something or someone else who's up to no good. Whatever is going on, I stay out of the way and pray I'm not the one killed and stolen by the mech."

Source: Rickets **[male human, Fighter 7, hp 55],** a human fighter from Chemak that has hired on as a guard with a merchant car-avan currently staying in the city. Rickets has been in the city for several weeks now and is about ready to shove off on his own. He's tall, over six feet, and wears his long, black hair in a ponytail. Rickets wears chainmail and carries a long sword and shield. He's friendly, outgoing, and always ready for a drink.

Follow Up: If the player characters remain in the area they'll see the mech approach and kill several individuals each night. After a few days, if they don't take care of the problem on their own, city elders approach the party and offer to pay them if they'll eliminate the threat. The mech will be difficult to defeat but the elders will certain-ly offer just enough of a reward to entice the party into attempting to destroy the abomi-nation.

Note: The Defender mech can be found on p. 18 of Goodman Games' ***Mech Manual.*** If you do not have the ***Mech Manual*** you can substitute any mech design of your choice. Visit **www.good-mangames.com** for more information about the ***Mech Manual***.
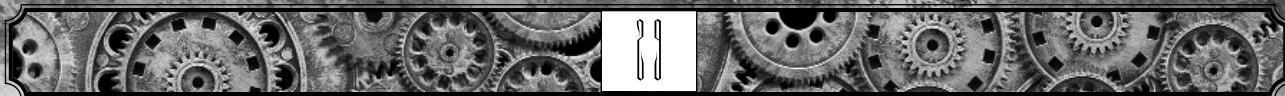
A Vile Furnace?

As conceived here, the soul furnace inflicts only Constitution damage, not drain. Thus the vitality sapping done by a soul furnace on a living individual is not permanent.

This is what makes the engine such an interesting design; while the fact that it draws on necromantic powers to power itself is almost universally considered evil, or at a minimum dangerous, the fact is that nothing says that the soul furnace has to consume even one life. In fact, smart "fuel" management would be to have enough individuals on board to allow a rotating system to where each individual is drained to some extent and then given time to recover fully before being hooked back into the engine.

Naturally, one would think that most people would not voluntarily hook themselves to a soul furnace, but why not? Is it too high a price to pay for the safety of a mech to be asked to spend a few hours hooked into a soul furnace in order to power it?

Of course if the DM wishes to have the soul furnace be a truly vile design he or she can simply have the furnace inflict permanent Constitution drain rather than temporary Constitution damage. In this case the "fuel" will obviously have to be replaced on a regular basis (much like a steam-powered mech needs to take on coal or wood) and it is doubtful there will be any volunteers willing to step into the furnace in such circumstances.

What's Going On

Ribalder Grack is indeed dead. He was dragged from his mech one night by iron shamblers under the control of Merdig **[male dwarf, Constructor 14, hp 39]**, a disgruntled former Stenian who was ejected from the College of Constructors for working on a soul furnace. The dwarf is now working in concert with Chanaw **[female half-orc, Cleric 14, hp 32]** to help her produce an army of smoking dead with which she plans to take over the nearby communities (and use the "resources" in those communities to produce more undead in order to increase her power).

Although not evil himself Merdig has agreed to aid Chanaw's vile designs because she has promised to help him improve his soul furnace, a prototype of which he has installed in the Defender.

Currently their designs are still in their infancy and the duo are using Grack's mech, powered by Merdig's prototype soul furnace (the engine draws its power from an unfortunate local who is imprisoned in the soul furnace) and piloted by the dwarf, to kill the locals and carry their bodies back to their secret lair.

Between them the pair already have a sizable force of iron shamblers (Merdig can control up to 28 HD worth of iron shamblers) and smoking dead (Chanaw is capable of controlling 56 HD of smoking dead and can create and control even more powerful undead using *create undead, greater create undead* and her rebuke undead ability) but want to make absolutely sure that they have an overwhelming force before attacking the nearby communities.

The Soul Furnace

As conceived by Merdig and Chanaw, the soul furnace saps the vitality from living,

intelligent creatures (i.e. humanoids) to power itself, transforming a humanoid's life energy into kinetic force. The soul furnace can be placed only in steam-powered, clockwork, or man-powered mech designs; the soul furnace will not work in animated or undead mechs since they do not actually have engines in their design.

Creating a soul furnace requires the Craft Wondrous Item feat and must be done by a spellcaster of at least 10th level who also possesses 10+ ranks in Craft (mechcraft) and has access to necromantic spells of at least 5th level. A soul furnace increases the base cost of a mech or the device it is attached to by 50% (i.e. a soul furnace for an iron maiden costs one-half of its 11,130 gp base cost, or 5,565 gp).

As stated previously, the soul furnace draws creatures' life energy to power itself. It does this by inflicting Constitution damage on creatures attached to the furnace. The amount of Constitution points required to power an engine through a soul furnace depends on the size of what it runs:

Size	Daily (24 hour) Constitution Point Requirement
Medium	1
Large	2
Huge	4
Gargantuan	6
Colossal	10
Colossal II	16
Colossal III	26
Colossal IV	42
Colossal V	68
City-mech A	110
City-mech B	178
City-mech C	288
City-mech D	466
City-mech E	754
City-mech F	1,220

It can be assumed that the average individual has a Constitution score of 11. Thus it would take around 120 individuals getting within an inch of their lives to fuel the largest city mech for 24 hours while the pilot of a Huge mech would only temporarily sacrifice one point of Constitution to power her mech for six hours.

How Many Soul Furnaces Are There?

In order to limit the soul furnace to this one adventure, the DM can work to have the Defender destroyed – the soul furnace housed within its body completely obliterated in a battle with the player characters.

Destroying the Defender won't be enough to keep the soul furnace out of future adventures, though. If the player characters, once they learn the secret of the soul furnace, try to capture Merdig or Chanaw in an attempt to steal the secret of soul furnaces, a patrol of Stenian mechs could come across the action just as the player characters are capturing the pair. On orders, the Stenian patrol takes charge of the situation and arrests Merdig and Chanaw. The player characters are thanked for their assistance and offered a reward and then the two are taken away and never heard from again.

Of course, the DM may *like* the idea of soul furnaces becoming a permanent part of his campaign. In such an instance, Merdig and Chanaw escape to return another day – more powerful and with more soul furnace-powered mechs.

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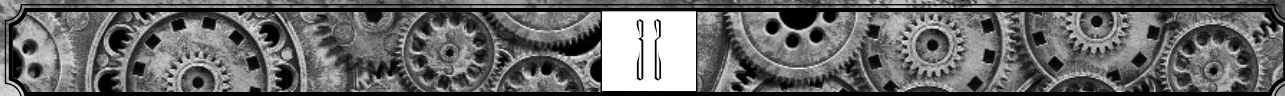
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