FRAGE EMPERE Genetic Spectres Written by Chris Lites

An Adventure Suitable for Characters with 6-10 Resources.

Fragged Empire Adventure: Genetic Spectres.

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Ending Episode Two





Acknowledgements

A Difficult Adventure GMs may need to tone down the combat difficulty if your Players are not faring well. As the Great War ground to a halt, the Archons watched their great empire reduced to embers like a handful of stars against the black of night. When the last of them lay dying, they made final efforts to undo those mechanical monsters they created to fight X'ion's Nephilim horrors.

Yet, the Archons' creations were not wholly their own. They fused human robotics with bio-disintegration weaponry, creating the fearsome Mechonid. The Archons thought themselves the masters of these machines. They were wrong.

The technology upon which the Mechonids were based stretched back to the days of time-lost humanity. Taking what they could find in human records and ruins, the Archons recreated human-made robots as best they could. Yet the Archons did not possess the knowledge of those who created them and, in their arrogance, they brought about their own undoing. The robots the Archons created served them well at first, dealing devastating defeats to the Nephilim... but soon the creations turned upon their masters and on all biological life.

The Archons and the war are a hundred years gone and the Mechonid threat largely forgotten. These strange mechanical creations went into hibernation at the end of the war and have not reappeared since. Until now....

Some small while ago, a freelance team working for the Corporation recovered a massive Nephlim warship, the Leviathan (see 'Let Sleeping Gods Lie' adventure for details). 'Genetic Spectres' may be played as a follow-up to that adventure or run as a standalone mission. In either case, the current adventure ties into the aforementioned 'Let Sleeping Gods Lie'.

Briefly, 'Let Sleeping Gods Lie' involved the recovery of a gigantic, sentient Nephilim warship called Leviathan. Leviathan's final mission before it went into hibernation after having been wounded was the destruction of a weapons platform.

After the team turned Leviathan over to the Corporation and collected their fee, the Corporation studied the vessel intensely. They discovered the Leviathan's final mission to destroy the weapons platform was of higher priority than it should have been. It seems the platform was also an Archon research facility. Inside that facility was a cube displaying quantum properties which warped space-time. This artifact tied directly to the Mechonids method of communication using Ley Lines. It was dubbed "the quantum cube."

The cube was moved at the end of the war by an Archon called Zalos. Zalos understood the danger of the artifact but not how it worked. No Archon understood the workings of this strange cube, for it was created by humanity. Yet, the Archons knew the danger of what they created and that the cube somehow communicated with these creations. The simple answer would have been to destroy the cube utterly, yet all attempts to do so failed.

Thus, at the very end of the war, Zalos brought the cube to a

secret facility on Mishpacha. He would seal the cube underground and conceal it with rapidly growing flora so as to appear like normal terrain. That almost went to plan.

Unfortunately for Zalos, a host of Mechonids followed him to Mishpacha. In a desperate battle, Zalos was mortally wounded. Dying, he activated a property of the cube which created a force field, trapping the Mechonids. It has been a century since that day. The curiosity of scientists now releases the Mechonid menace once again. Zalos bought the Haven System time, but his hopes to trap the Mechonids forever were futile.

In time, the Archons faded into memory, and the facility was forgotten. Yet, for over one hundred years it has remained, sealing both the Mechonids and the cube inside. While a few Mechonids woke during the Corporation's exploration of the Haven System, the vast host of them remain in slumber somewhere in the depths of space. It is only the field around the facility that prevents the cube from contacting, and waking, that dark threat to all biological life. Of course, almost no one alive today understands the history of the Mechonids or the threat they pose. In fact, even now an innocent archaeological expedition has stumbled upon the facility and mistaken it for an Archon tomb. They believe great scientific advances made by the Archons lie inside. They are half right.

The Archaeological Research Team (Team Sierra)

Three years ago, using Corporation money and Kaltoran scientists, a scientific orbital station called Archimedes was constructed. This unprecedented project marked a real step forward in interspecies cooperation. The Kaltorans with their racial memories knew the Archons had hidden tombs all over Mishpacha. In fact, none of these were tombs, but understanding the Archons has always been problematic.

The orbital station's purpose was to map Mishpacha using advanced ground penetrating sensors so that these Archon tombs might be revealed. Various anomalies were detected over the last three years, but very little of value has been retrieved. This is a two-part problem.

Mishpacha is not a safe planet. It is a wild, untamed world. Thick jungles contain mutated plants that kill sentient beings. Feral Nephilim stalk these same jungles protecting their territory with deadly force. Even if there were no Mechonid menace, Mishpacha would still be a challenging, possibly lethal, planet.

Secondly, the ground penetrating sensors, while advanced, only show anomalies. They do not reveal the precise nature of those underground anomalies. Some turn out to be ruins, while others are revealed as mere caverns. Many a team that did survive came back with reports of Archon ruins picked clean.

Team Sierra took a shuttle down to an outpost known as Tartarus. This was two weeks ago. After four days, the orbital station lost contact with the team. The scientific facility called Archimedes has little in the way of combat ready resources. The Corporation subsidiary called Yoyodyne offered to send Legion troops but, in the interest of fair cooperation, the Kaltorans suggested using a mercenary team. Yoyodyne agreed. What Yoyodyne did not tell the Kaltoran contingent was that the mercenary team would really be working for them. The Kaltorans, for their part, have not shared all the data Team Sierra gathered with Yoyodyne.

The Mission

The adventure breaks down into three acts as outlined below. Each act presents NPCs and complications in the plot with which the PCs must deal. The overall structure is that of a linear mission. The team takes the job, visits the station, goes planet side, and finds out why the scientists are missing. From there, they are hunted by Mechonids and pushed deeper into the jungle. They find there is no escape. No ship can take off and no communication can reach the station. Something has stranded them there. Their only recourse is to reach the Archon "tomb" and attempt to disable the field preventing their escape. They do not realize, of course, that this field also traps the Mechonid threat and the mysterious cube.

Prologue, pg: 12

A Yoyodyne liaison named Milo (with whom the PCs have dealt before) informs the team that they are about to be offered an independent job. Milo proposes to pay them a great deal more money to secretly work for him and the Yoyodyne Corporation. They are to find a missing scientific research team on Mishpacha and recover a cube-shaped artifact located somewhere in the area.

Episode One, pg: 13

The team meets with the Kaltoran scientists aboard Archimedes. They learn of the missing Team Sierra, and one character realizes a researcher was a past love. Varying motives on the part of the scientists are noted, and the PCs suspect there is more going on than meets the eye.

After landing in the rough and tumble outpost known as Tartarus, the team finds a guide to take them in the direction of Team Sierra. The jungle proves another enemy as leftover creations from the war attack the characters. This is why Mishpacha is such a dangerous place. Hell, even the plant life is out to get you!

Episode Two, pg: 21

The PCs make contact with the missing Team Sierra who has no idea they are "missing" at all. According to them, they have been in constant contact with Archimedes. It soon becomes clear their transmissions never made it to the space station but were instead intercepted by unknown parties. Someone or something has pretended to be the scientists aboard Archimedes.

The team believes they have found an ancient Archon tomb as well as Archon servants. These flying robots appear innocuous. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Episode Three, pg: 27

When the PCs realize the little robots (actually Mechonid Acolytes) are dangerous, the Acolytes attack. The PCs manage to defeat these smaller robots only to discover their communicators, too, are unable to reach anything off world. They get a static-ridden response from Tartarus which seems to be under attack. All the while, one of Team Sierra keeps a dark secret – he is actually a member of a cult that worships the Mechonids as gods. This team member,

Cain, believes he can control the Mechonids, succeeding where the Archons failed.

The team may either try to intervene in the battle raging at Tartarus or flee deeper into the jungle.

Episode Four, pg: 32

It becomes clear that the acolytes are only a minor threat. The team is now stalked by Mechonids designed for war. This game of cat and mouse is not going in the team's favor, and one-by-one the NPCs are picked off.

Meanwhile, Cain plots to take the cube for himself.

Episode Five, pg: 38

The team arrives at the "tomb." Exploration begins, and Mechonids track and attempt to kill the group. Sensors indicate the field preventing their escape from the planet is located inside the tomb. What they do not realize is that Cain plans to steal the cube and use it to control the Mechonids. A huge battle ensues between the PCs, Cain and the Mechonids. Cain uses the cube to open a portal and escape. The PCs race after him only to find themselves in a Mechonid Harbinger where Cain and the team face down for the last time.

In the end, Cain's arrogance overcomes him. He cannot succeed where the Archons failed. It was folly for him to think he could. The Mechonids tear him apart and then turn on the PCs. They barely escape with their lives. The adventure ends ominously – the cube emits a signal through the Ley Lines. The message is a single word: WAKE.

PC Pre-Gen Characters

The following characters were introduced in the adventure Let Sleeping Gods Lie. They were less experienced then and have seen much more of the world than before. Each has changed in some way, and notes are provided on how each might interact in the adventure. If the players are using their own PCs, the GM may want to use some of these notes and adapt them to these other characters.

Lucas Adventure Notes

Lucas had a love affair with a pretty Kaltoran scientist. That now seems like a long time ago. They were truly in love, but Lucas had so much baggage from his childhood that he ultimately pushed her away. Coupled with his corporate ambitions at the time, the two parted ways. Yet neither ever forgot the other. Lucas sometimes wonders what became of Jezebel. Sometimes, late at night, he'll wake in his cabin with her name on his lips and her scent in his nostrils. That's when he starts to drink.

He wishes there was a better way to forget.

Talia Adventure Notes

This cute Kaltoran has had a crush on Lucas for the last year or longer. She doesn't know what to do about that. Beytah told her she needs to move on, and Talia is thinking about leaving the crew. It would be very hard for her to do so, but it might be the only way to get over Lucas.

In this adventure, her technical skills are essential. She needs to help the team figure out what they are facing and how to survive. Talia also has ancestral memories of the Mechonids. While her ancestors never met them directly, she does know more about them than the rest of the team. The details of what she knows are up to the GM.

Note: neither the GM nor the PC playing Talia should feel obligated to roleplay the crush. It exists only to make the team dynamics more interesting, no more.

Beytah Adventure Notes

Beytah has an enormous facility for science. She is logical and deductive. In Genetic Spectres, Beytah's scientific acumen is needed to unlock some of the mysteries behind the Mechonids. Working with Talia, the two can potentially solve many problems presented to the team.

> Beytah must be careful, however, for any news of possible human artifacts causes her to slip the bonds of logic. She's emotional about humanity in a way the rest of the crew isn't. She has to remind herself to stop and think before chasing after any rumor of the vanished founder race.

Aurelius Adventure Notes

As a Legion warrior, Aurelius is the "tank" of the group. He is familiar with most weapons in existence and an expert in hand-to-hand combat. There is a lot of combat in this adventure, and the team looks to Aurelius for support. Lucas might be the leader, but when the bullets and energy beams are flying, it is Aurelius who steps up.

During this adventure, Aurelius may get the chance to meet other Legion troops. This might be great news if it weren't for how he mustered out. Everyone knows what happened to his unit, and few Legion trust a soldier that

might kill their own. If Aurelius is to gain their respect, he may have to fight them in unarmed combat to do so.

Most importantly, Legion DNA is key to this adventure. If the Mechonids do not get it from Praxus, then Aurelius becomes their next target. They are relentless. They will get the DNA.

Lucas Varenz

You grew up so far below the poverty line that you didn't even realize there was one. In time, you put the bad memories of your mother selling herself behind you. You put home behind you, the filthy backwater that it was. You joined the Corporation where, you hoped, you would at last escape your roots.

Things went well for a while, but you were too much an individual for Corporate bureacracy. There was a fistfight. You were politely asked to leave. After that, you didn't know how you were going to keep afloat, but a chance encounter got you your own ship, The Ransom, and eventually a crew to fly her.

That was some time ago now. You cannot believe how fast time has gone. At first, you and your shipmates didn't trust each other. Now, you've become a dysfunctional family. Each of you has your weaknesses and strengths.

You are their leader though. You are the one who knows how to navigate the world of the Corporation and negotiate with fixers and agents. You have won and lost more than one small fortune for you and your crew. Luck doesn't seem to be on your side. Then again, all of you should be dead twice over, so maybe you ought to take your luck where you can get it.

Being a leader doesn't come naturally to you, and you have confided as much to Talia. Your early life was miserable, and you spent a lot of time alone. Now, you head this weird family of outcasts. You aren't always sure you are up to the task. What if you get them all killed?

Primaru Skils:

Filling Skils:			Complication	
+2 Wealth	-2 Mechanics	+1 Small Arms	Head Set (Short Range Comms (100km)).	
+2 Conversation	+2 Electronics	-2 Heavy Arms	Flash Light (Small, Load 1, Reduce Low Light Cover penaltie	es by
-2 Leadership	+3 Programming	+2 Tactical	2 Steps in Splash 3 of any area and against you).	
+1 Culture	-2 Bio Tech	-2 Exotic	Drone Control Moduel.	
+1 Physical	-2 Medicine	+1 Command	Briefcase of Clothes (Conversation Toolbox).	
-2 Resolve	-2 Psychology	-2 Engineering	Electricians Tool Belt (Electronics Toolbox).	
+1 Awareness	-2 Astronomy	+3 Operations	Portable Computer (Programming Toolbox).	
-2 Survival	-2 Planetoids	-2 Gunnery	Food and Water (7 Days).	
Str 3 1 Foc	2 4 Defence: 1	0+Ref+ =	Armour: 2 + = 2 End: 10+(Str x5)+	= 25
Ref 4 2 Int	3 5 vs Impair (Def+Str+ = 7	vs Energy + (1) Recovery Foc + ()	= 2
Mov 3 3 Per	3 6 vs Psionic (Def+Foc+ = 6	vs Slow + O Stealth Tac + Ref + O	= (+6)
Fate	1 vs Stealth *+#Allies (max: 10)	$10 + \text{Per} + \bigcirc = \bigcirc^*$	at O Endurance - Combat Order Int +	= 3
			l l	
Weapons	Hit End Dmg	Crit Rng Clips	Ammo Load RoF Wgt Type & Variation	Cost
Dual Ion SMGs	+] 7	3 3 4	12 1 4 (+3d6) 2 Gun, Ion	3
	Lock On +1, Jam (1-3),	Modification: Dual Wield (Optio	nal).	
Swarm Drone with SMG	+5 4	3 2 5	9 1 3 (+2d6) 1 (+0) Drone, Gun, Ion	3

Fauinment

Defence: 18, Armour: 3, Movement: 6, Slots: 2, Bodies: 1, Lock On +5, May be Set Up as a single Thrown Action (Rng = Str), Robot, Energy

Strong Hits	Requirements	Benefits
Effort	Primary or Vehicle Skill, Does not Req Success	You may re-roll a single die from this Skill Roll.
Critical Hit	Attack, Hit, 1 use per RoF, No Splash Damage	Deal your Weapons Critical Damage (-Targets Armour) to a random (roll a d6) Attribute.
Critical Boost	Attack, Does not Req Hit	+1 Critical Damage for this Attack vs all Targets with O Endurnace.
Covering Fire	Attack, Does not Require Hit, RoF 2+	1 Ally gains Heavy Cover (+4) or +1 Cover Step until your next Turn.

Talia Thrift

You were always good with machines – better than with people, probably. When you first met Lucas, you didn't figure you'd stick around his crappy ship for long. You now think of the ship as home and the crew as your brothers and sisters. Well, you don't think of Lucas that way. Ugh! It's hard having feelings for him. He's somewhat of a father figure to you and the crew, and yet you fell for him nonetheless.

He doesn't know, thankfully, but Beytah says you have to tell him. What does she know? She's only five years old!

Machines, that's where you're comfortable. Back in the underwater cities where you grew up, you had tunnels upon forking tunnels in which to get lost. Sometimes, you'd pretend each fork was another pathway in the life you would one day live. You never imagined in those days that your life would look anything like this.

The corridors of the Ransom aren't as big, and they don't have any forks. There isn't any way to get away from people outside your bunk, and that gets lonely you have to admit.

Still, life isn't bad. You've saved up some money, even as your friends lost most of theirs. You've become the default loan shark on the ship because of this, though you don't bother to collect. They're all good for it...eventually. Now, if you could just get Lucas out of your head. You need to because the only time you and he really talk these days is when he's drunk and going on about his old flame, Jezebel. You don't need to hear that.

Primary Skils:

T THILLY OKIGS			CYON
-3 Wealth	+2 Mechanics	+2 Small Arms	Hea
-1 Conversation	+2 Electronics	+1 Heavy Arms	Mec
-1 Leadership	+0 Programming	-2 Tactical	Elec
-1 Culture	-1 Bio Tech	-2 Exotic	Foo
+1 Physical	–1 Medicine	+2 Command	
+1 Resolve	–1 Psychology	+2 Engineering	
+3 Awareness	-1 Astronomy	-2 Operations	
+2 Survival	-1 Planetoids	-2 Gunnery	
Str. 3 1 Foo		$1 + \mathbf{P}_{\alpha} (\mathbf{r}_{\alpha} (\mathbf{r}_{\alpha}) - \mathbf{r}_{\alpha} [\mathbf{r}_{\alpha}]\mathbf{r}_{\alpha}]$	Armoi

Equipment:

Head Set (Short Range Comms (100km)). Mechanics Tool Box (Mechanics Toolbox). Electricians Tool Belt (Electronic Toolbox). Food and Water (7 Days).



Weapons	Hit	End Dmg	Crit	Rng	Clips	Ammo	Load	RoF	Wgt	Type & Variation	Cost
Shotgun	+5	8	3	Ч*	5	3	1	2 (+1d6)	3	Gun, Shell, Kinetic	3
	Splash 1,	Low Tech, *S	trong Hit	(5-6) vs T	argets with	iin first Ran	ge Increm	nent, Modific	ation: A	dvanced Ammunition, Extended Clip.	
Smoke Grenades	-1	-	-	3	3	1	1	1	1	Thrown, Shell, Smoke	0
	Splash 3	Small, Slow,	Low Tech	i, Creates a	in Area of	Limited Visi	on (Light	Cover (+2))	for 3 m	inuets, Does not Work in Void.	

Utility Item

Multispectral Visor Reduce all of your Target's Limited Vision and Low Light Cover by 2 Steps.

Cost

Strong Hits	Requirements	Benefits
Effort	Primary or Vehicle Skill, Does not Req Success	You may re-roll a single die from this Skill Roll.
Critical Hit	Attack, Hit, 1 use per RoF, No Splash Damage	Deal your Weapons Critical Damage (-Targets Armour) to a random (roll a d6) Attribute.
Critical Boost	Attack, Does not Req Hit	+1 Critical Damage for this Attack vs all Targets with O Endurnace.
Tweak	Attack, Hit, Non Infinite Clips or Ammo	Gain +2 Endurance Damage on this Weapon for the remainder of the Combat (Stacks).

Beytah

You have so many memories that are not your own. They aren't anyone's, really, just figments dreamed up by Nephilim scientists. Since you joined the crew of The Ransom, though, you've been building real memories, your memories. It's hard to describe what that feels like to anyone who isn't an Emissary like you.

Well, you aren't really an Emissary anymore. You dropped out of the program and took up science with a Corporate apprenticeship. Science was the only thing you trusted for a long time. Today, you trust your friends on The Ransom. That's a major step for you. For the first time in your life, you feel like you really belong, like you have a family. Not so long ago you found a derelict Nephilim ship named Leviathan. That experience changed you. You know the Nephilim who designed you want to interact with the other three races, but you also realized how different they are from them. There's a threat out there and, one day, you and the other "Emissaries" like you are going to have to choose a side.

When you have private time, you collect all you can on the human race. Any scrap of old text, any rumor, any artifact—it all feels important to you. You cannot say precisely why. Perhaps you feel like they are your true ancestors. Born in a vat, you don't really have any forebears, but the human race gave birth to you all.



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Aurelius March

Back when you served in the mercenary Legions, your family was your brothers in arms. Today, the crew of The Ransom is your family. Each of you would lay down your life for one another. In fact, they all already have laid down their lives for you.

See, when you were a Legion merc, you were infected with a Nephilim biological agent that drove most of your unit insane. They either killed themselves or died trying to kill other Legion. There wasn't anything the doctors could do. You were forced out. Sooner or later, you assumed you'd go mad as well.

Eventually, you did, but your new family was there for you. You don't want to think about what happened much less talk about it. The crew doesn't mention it, but you owe them all. You still see things

sometimes, things that are not really there. You cannot always trust your senses. For a warrior, that's a very hard reality to face.

In your travels around the Haven System, you constantly search for a cure to the toxin in your brain. If you can find it, you'd give anything for it – anything except your new family.

Your team counts on you to be the stalwart soldier. You are proud of this, but you sometimes doubt you are what they really need. Still, you know they lean on you, and you haven't felt needed since your brothers died in battle. You've spent a lot of free time aboard the ship training the others in weapons and unarmed combat. They have become an effective unit – not Legion, but pretty good for the other races.

Primary Skils:

Filling Skits:		
-2 Wealth	-2 Mechanics	–2 Small Arms
-2 Conversation	-2 Electronics	+2 Heavy Arms
+1 Leadership	-2 Programming	-2 Tactical
-2 Culture	-2 Bio Tech	+1 Exotic
+2 Physical	-2 Medicine	+1 Command
+2 Resolve	+2 Psychology	-2 Engineering
+1 Awareness	-2 Astronomy	-2 Operations
+1 Survival	-2 Planetoids	+2 Gunnery
		^

Equipment:

Head Set (Short Range Comms (100km)). Flash Light (Small, Load 1, Reduce Low Light Cover penalties by 2 Steps in Splash 3 of any area and against you). Cooking Set (Survival Toolbox). Food and Water (7 Days).

Str 5 1	Foc 2 4	Defence:	$10 + \text{Ref} + \bigcirc = \bigcirc_{\text{+Cover}}^{13}$	Armour: (2 + 2) = (4)	End: 10+(Str x5)+ -15)= 20
Ref 3 2 Mov 3 3	Int 2 5 Per 2 6 Fate 2	vs Impair vs Psionic vs Stealth *+#Allies (max: 10)	$Def+Str + (2) = (20)$ $Def+Foc + (3) = (15)$ $10+Per + (3) = (13)^*$	vs Energy + 1 vs Slow + O at 0 Endurance - 3	RecoveryFoc $*$ (5) = (7)Stealth Req: CoverTac + Ref $*$ () = (+1)Combat OrderInt $*$ () = (2)

Weapons	Hit	End Dmg	Crit	Rng	Clips	Ammo	Load	RoF	Wgt	Type & Variation	Cost
Gauss Assault Rifle	+2	5	Ч	3	3	12	2	3 (+2d6)	2	Gun, Gauss	3
	Lock On	+1, Jam (1-2).	Modificat	tion: Low Q	uality, Pers	sonalised.					
Old Sword	+]	7	Ч	-	-	-	1	1	2*	Melee, Composite	1
	Lock On	+1, *Only ever	requires	1 Hand, Mc	dification:	Personalise	d.				
Grenades	+2	7	5	1	2	1	1	1	1	Thrown, Shell, Kinetic	1
	Lock On	+1, Splash 2, I	Low Tech,	Small, Slo	ow, -2 to a	ll Weapon M	Iodificatio	on Spare Tim	e Rolls.		

Strong Hits	Requirements	Benefits
Effort	Primary or Vehicle Skill, Does not Req Success	You may re-roll a single die from this Skill Roll.
Critical Hit	Attack, Hit, 1 use per RoF, No Splash Damage	Deal your Weapons Critical Damage (-Targets Armour) to a random (roll a d6) Attribute.
Critical Boost	Attack, Does not Req Hit	+1 Critical Damage for this Attack vs all Targets with O Endurnace.
Coordinated Strike	Attack, Hit	An Ally gains Strong Hit +1 vs your Target with their next Attack (must be taken within 1 Turn) (does not Stack).
Suppression Fire	Damage, Does not Reg Hit, RoF 3+, Crit Dmg 4+	Non-Nemesis Target character is Suppressed.

Repair 🔿

Change Out Change I Attribute, Wpn, Trait or new Spacecraft.	Maintenance; Heal 1 and a Minor Condition (eg: Virus). Requires: Toolbox.
Quick Fix: Heal any 2	Rebuild: Heal one 8
Reg: Workshop. Only Heals Omg dealt this Combat.	and a Major Condition (eg: Lost Wing).
May only be rolled once per available Workshop.	Requires: Workshop.

Req: Workshop. Only Heals Ding dealt this Combat.

Spacecraft Environment

Atmosphere:	 Engine Attribute Damage (no Armour) at the end of each Turn. Attribute Damage (no Armour) at the end of each 3rd Turn. Hit and Range.
Dust Cloud:	Take Damage equal to your Velocity. Hit -2 if you Attack through Dust Cloud.
Gravity Field:	Gain +2 Velocity when you enter a Gravity Field. May make a free Rotate of 45° towards the source of the Gravity Field.
Nebula:	Remove any Locked On Effects on you. Remove all Locked On Effects you have applied to your Opponents. May have additional GM defined effects.
Object:	Reduce Vel by 2, if not 1 or 2: take 1 Attribute Dmg (no Armour). Hit -2 if you Attack through an Object.
Spacecraft:	Other Spacecraft immediatly move into an adjacent space.

Spacecraft Effects

Boarded:	May have up to 5 Boarded Effects applied to you. At the start of your Opponent's Turn they may make 1 Boarding Party Attack against you. On a failed Attack Roll, remove 1 Boarded Effect.
Locked On: On Fire:	Enemies gain Hit: +Lock On vs you. 1 Attribute Dmg (no Armour) at the start of your Turn.
Drone Action	Attack Hit +RoF *Damage Pick One: *Attack. Draw Wpn, Reload, Set Up or Pull Down or Move make a Analyse, Stealth or Escape Attack Roll.

Healing 🖸

(12t (+)

2x 14t (+

First Aid; Stops & May be performed during Co Requires: Toolkit.	Bleeding 🕡 (+) ombat.	extended Care; Heal all and a Minor Condition. Requires: Toolbox.	2x 12t (+
Paramedics: Heal Req: Toolbox, Only Heals Omg Healing may be applied to mu Must be performed directly af Maximum of 1 Paramedics Rol	ultiple Characters. ter a Combat.	Surgery; Heal one 8 and a Major or Minor Condition. Requires: Workshop. May Retro any Trait for a Implant Trait.	2x 14t (+
Personal Comba	t Environment		
Zero Gravity:	Moving one space Hit -2		

	Hit -2 No Overburden Penalty.
Cover X:	Defence +X
Difficult Terrain:	Moving one space costs 2 Movement.
Open/Close Door:	Cost 2 Movement to Change.

Personal Combat Effects Bleeding: 1 Attribute Dmg (no Armour) at the start of your Turn. Grabbing Target: As with Grabbed Effect but may remove as a Free Action. Grabbed: 1 Action per Turn.

	May Move with Target if you have higher Str. Gain 1 Additional Action if you remove this Effect.
Limited Vision:	Targets gain Cover versus you: Light Cover (Low Light) or Heavy Cover (Blind, Pitch Black) vs You.
Locked On:	Enemies gain Hit: +Lock On vs you.
Prone:	+1 Cover Step Cost 2 Movement to Change. Moving one space costs 2 Movement while Prone.
Stealthed:	May not be Targeted while in Cover. Lost on Major Effect: Attack. Lost next Turn if 1st Action is not a successful Stealth Action.
Suppressed:	Maximum 1 Action this Turn.

Personal Combat Actions

		Pick an	ny 2 Actions Per Tur	n Bo	nuses from the same Action d	o not Stack		
	Tacti	cal Actions		Rang	e Actions		Melee	Actions
Full Move	Move	Move +2	Snap Shot	Attack Damage Move		Strike	Attack Damage Move	Hit +Ref +Extra RoF Dice Move -2
Take Cover	Move	+1 Cover Step Armour vs Slow +1 (go Prone)	Spray Fire	Attack Damage Move	Hit +Per +Extra RoF Dice Move -2	Charge	Attack Damage Move	Move +2 (Straight Line) Damage +1 (per 4 Movement)
Prep	Recover	Pick One: Draw Wpn, Reload, Un-Jam, Set Up, Pull Down, Use Stim or Skill Roll (Medical).	Sighted Shot	Attack Damage	Hit +Per Range +Foc	Block	Impair	Hit +Per +Foc On Hit: Debuff Targets next Attack: Strong Hit -1
Analyse	Attack Recover	On Hit: Boost next Attack: Crit Attribute Location +/-2	Throw	Attack Damage Move	Hit +Ref Range +Str	Impair	Damage Impair Move	Hit +Ref +Str On Hit: Pick One Debuff vs Target: Prone, Grab or Move 1
Stealth	Stealth	Vs Highest Defence On Hit: Cannot Be Targeted	Overwatch	Attack* Damage	Hit +Per *May Attack in a 180 Arc in response to any Action.	Escape	Damage Impair Move	Hit +Ref +Str On Hit: Debuff Target; Loose Grabbing Target.

Spacecraft Combat System Rolls



Prologue

The team has been through a few adventures and learned some secrets about the Fragged Empire world. If you are using the pre-generated characters from the previous adventure (Let Sleeping Gods Lie) that group has gained more resources and some additional backstory. If you are using the player's own characters, a few plot seeds are introduced to help tie them into the plot on a personal level. As always, the GM is free to discard or alter any such elements they wish.

Milo

Milo is a successful Yoyodyne executive of unspecified title. He is an up and comer in the Corporation and has made several moves up the ladder in recent months. One of these promotions was due, in part, to the PCs. If the GM is using the same characters from the previous Fragged Empire adventure, Milo hired them to find Leviathan.

If not, he explains vaguely what happened during that mission (see introduction). In either case, the PCs have worked for Milo in the past and trust him as much as anyone in this business trusts anyone.

Milo informs the team that he has arranged for them to receive a job offer on Mishpacha. A research team has gone missing on the planet. He explains that the Yoyodyne has partnered with Kaltoran scientists to search for Archon tech.

"You know how it is. We have the money and they have the memories. Archon tech, or any tech from the war, is the growth industry for the next decade. Anyway, we offered to send in some of our Legion troops, but they of course declined. I managed to get them to agree to an independent group of mercs. Mercs are neutral in general, but will actually be working for Yoyodyne... for me." Milo smiles wide then, his perfect teeth displayed like rare white jewels.

"You go in as a neutral party, right? But you really work for me. They'll pay you a hefty sum. I'll pay you double on top of that. Can't say no to that kind of money, can you?"

Milo is a charming salesman. He could sell a Kaltoran a history of his own family. The PCs are free to reject his offer, but he then ups the money. He knows the team and wants someone he knows on the ground Once the fee is agreed upon, Milo presents the conditions of their agreement.

- » The Kaltorans are not to know that the team is secretly working for Yoyodyne.
- » The team is to recover a cube-shaped Archon artifact. The Kaltorans most likely do not even know it is there. If pressed, Milo explains the intelligence comes from Leviathan's memories.
- » The team must deliver the cube to Yoyodyne.
- » Rescuing the scientists is desirable but not necessary for completion of the mission.
- » Anyone else is expendable.

It's a pretty standard agreement coming from the Corporation. Since Milo only really wants the cube, he gives the PCs a lot of leeway in how they obtain it. Once the PCs agree to these conditions, he has them move their hands through a holoprojection that scans their DNA as a "signature" to the contract. Once again, the PCs find themselves working for the Corporation. At least, they pay on time.

Milo gives the team an encrypted comm that they can use to communicate with him directly in an emergency.



Working For the Kaltorans

Yoyodyne isn't the only potential employer in this adventure. The Kaltorans could also hire the PCs. The Kaltoran scientists are much more emotionally invested in Team Sierra's disappearance. Not only is one scientist related to a lost team member, but Kaltorans who work closely together form a kind of extended family.

Where Yoyodyne only wants to monetize Team Sierra's discoveries, the Kaltoran scientists want to save their friends and gain knowledge. For this reason, they, too, might hire the team. This does not dramatically affect the way the adventure unfolds, but it does alter the tone.

The Kaltorans do not require the PCs to work clandestinely for them like Yoyodyne does. That plot element disappears. However, that does not mean that Milo might not make an offer to the team as well. Yoyodyne has put a lot of money into the Archimedes Station and the exploration of the anomaly on Mishpacha.

Episode One: Team Sierra

The PCs arrive on Archimedes Station.

Archimedes Station looks like a child's top abandoned in orbit above the green and blue planet of Mishpacha. As your ship nears the station, you notice a docking port's lights wink on. Over your comm comes the curt voice of someone aboard. "This is Archimedes, prepare for docking. Over?"

Once the PCs respond, Archimedes opens its docking port. This process is automated between the PC's ship's computer and the station.

They team enters via an airlock after a brief bioscan.

A scarlet laser plays over each of you individually—scanning for contaminants. Once the light is finished, a chiptone voice says, "Clear of all biohazards." The airlock door in front of you lights up and recedes into the ceiling with a "swoosh."

Archimedes is not that large. There is a main operations center, quarters for crew and some visitors, a cafeteria, and a very small gym. The rest is dedicated to a few labs and the vast antenna array slung under the bottom of the station. This array is cutting edge. Any one of the Kaltoran scientists can explain that the array works using ground penetrating sensors broadcast from the station which are then bounced back and "caught" by another sensor net. The data is then interpreted. Teams are sent down if an anomalu is deemed worthy of exploration.

The station itself looks like chaos to any non-Kaltoran. A hodgepodge of gangways and repurposed tech, the Kaltoran science labs look more like the lairs of mad doctors than the clean rooms of the Corporation.

Rusting girders have been welded together to form non-uniform hallways. Children run and play, their voices echoing down graffiti-laden corridors. You smell food cooking beneath the scent of industrial oil. The ceilings leak, and loops of wiring hang like intestines from above. Your footsteps echo on the metal flooring – a patchwork of uneven tiles bolted together like a mosaic. This is no Corporate facility but an amalgam of old and new technology—recycled hulls from centuries old ships abutting brand new shiny chrome deck plates. It is a Kaltoran home and workplace. Even now, you push aside a curtain of drying laundry trying to find your way to the operations center. This initial episode begins with a freeform RPG encounter. When the team docks, it is night on Mishpacha. The scientists recommend they wait until morning before going to the surface. That gives them about ten hours (Mishpacha is on a 28 hour cycle) to meet the crew aboard and learn about Team Sierra.

The Kaltoran scientists have their families aboard Archimedes. As noted in the boxed text, children run about freely. Workstations appear cluttered and in unlikely areas. The entire station has the feeling of being pieced together. NPCs are all over the place. The ones of note are listed below.

Archimedes NPC's

Chief Science Officer Sarah Vortice

Sarah Vortice is in overall command of Archimedes. She pioneered the technology the station uses to look for Archon bases on the planet below. She is a scientist and does not like the way the Corporation does business. Still, she realizes that the Corporation funds her work. Without them, none of this would be possible.

Sarah is a kind Kaltoran with short blonde hair and a comm-link habitually clipped to one of her four ears. She is attractive in a restrained, librarian sort of way.

Sarah's chief concern is finding the team she considers friends. She feels as if she may have sent them to their deaths. Clearly, she is not used to carrying such a weight. This is a weakness, as seen from the eyes of the Corporation and her chief rival aboard. (See below).

Project Manager Aaron Anderson

A Vagarti, Anderson is Corporate. He works for Yoyodyne but does not know of any deal Milo may have cut with the PCs. Anderson is far more objective than Sarah Vortice. He believes the recovery of Archon artifacts is worth the lives of researchers. He wants any intelligence from the surface, especially said artifacts. Securing those takes priority over the retrieval of the team. "We all know what we signed on for. No one had any illusions about the conditions below."

Anderson may, if the GM chooses, approach the players about securing the artifacts first. He appeals to anyone who seems to be scientifically inclined. Anderson has his own motives. He wants to get his hands on the discoveries Team Sierra makes. This would be a major coup for his career, if he could analyze them privately. He might make a proposal to the PCs, as he does not know they are working for Milo.

In the Yoyodyne hierarchy, Milo outranks Anderson. However, nearly all Corporation structures offer the "Corporate ladder." Climbing it often involves less merit than duplicity, less talent than backstabbing. Anderson wants to leap up a few rungs. He isn't above bribery, lying, and theft to do so. All's fair in war and capitalism, after all.

Communications Officer Rachel Colson

This Kaltoran comm officer is a good friend of Sarah Vortice and has a husband in the missing team. She appears, upon first meeting her, to be desperately worried about her husband. This is a sham.

Rachel Colson is actually a secret member of the Seekers of the Saviours in Steel (see page 24 of The Antagonist Archive). Briefly, the Seekers of the Saviours in Steel, A.K.A. The Seekers, is a cult dedicated to the belief that the Mechonids are gods and digital rapture awaits if one could but find and understand these advanced machnes.

Colson has been a member of the Seekers for a long time. She is absolutely dedicated to finding them and helping them ascend to their rightful place as gods. Her "husband" is actually a fellow member of the cult. Both are committed to the Mechonids and the Seekers.

Yet Colson is an excellent liar. That is one reason she was assigned this particular mission aboard Archimedes. Colson knows only what her superiors tell her. She knows that the Archon base below contains Mechonids, and she knows that a cube-like artifact exists within. That artifact is important and to be retrieved at all costs. Cain, her faux-husband, is supposed to retrieve the cube.

Rachel insists that the PCs carry a transponder so they, too, don't get lost. She says she has modified the previous transponders for a stronger signal. In fact, they are modified to make it easy for the Mechonids to find the group.

At the GM's discretion, if the team looks into Rachel's communications, they may find coded transmissions sent to the cult. They cannot determine that they were sent to the cult, only that they were embedded inside normal transmission. In other words, they were hidden. The contents included the frequency of the shield keeping the Mechonids inside the "tomb." A similar message was received and decoded by her. In it was a harmonic frequency sent by the Seekers designed to open a hole in the shield.

Praxus Chief of Security

Legion, Praxus works for the Archimedes under sub-contract from Yoyodyne. The company wanted to send him more men and have him investigate what happened to the team. Sarah and the others resisted, and Yoyodyne sent the PCs as an independent solution. Praxus believes the team may have been hired because Yoyodyne has lost faith in him. This causes resentment on his part. He wants to prove that he needs no outside help. In reality, the PCs were hired because Milo is a scheming Corporate. Praxus didn't figure into Milo's decision at all, but Praxus doesn't know this. He thinks his job may be threatened.

"Hrmph, give me a few of my kind, and we'd have this sorted in no time. We don't need your kind here, Vagarti/ Four Ears/X'ion Spawn (or other racial type)." He is friendly toward any Legion member in the team.

Praxus has no special knowledge of the team's fate but, as chief of security, he feels it is his responsibility to discover their fate. He demands to go to Mishpacha with the PCs. Sarah authorizes this. He is handy to have in firefight, and his DNA is needed to unlock the cube.

Praxus' DNA is central to the adventure. A Legion PC's DNA can substitute though.

If Praxus joins the PCs, he will act as Companions under the PCs control.

What the Archimedes Crew Knows

Aside from Rachel, none of the Archimedes team knows what Team Sierra might have found below. They each have their own motives as listed above. Their story is true to the best of their knowledge.

Sarah explains, emotions causing her voice to halt at times. Anderson glares at her when she lets her emotions dominate.

"I... uh... that is we detected a substantial anomaly below. We did our usual... that is we analyzed the anomaly at length. It looked like the most solid lead we'd had in some times. We even had some resonance high spectrum readings. That means possible Archon technology extant below. I... I ordered Sierra Team to take one of the shuttles to the Mishpascha outpost of Tartarus. They were to find a guide through the jungle and set up basecamp. We lost contact with them four days into their mission. We... uh... we tried to contact them (holds back tears) many times. No signal came back. You need to find them (she gets more desperate). You have to find them and bring them back. Safe, you hear me, safe!"

At this point Rachel puts a consoling hand on her shoulder. Anderson makes a remark about Vortice's emotional investment and lack of objectivity. The two get into an argument. Anderson: "You're too invested emotionally. Yoyodyne wants discoverie, not sentiment. As a scientist, you should want the same."

Rachel: "And all you Corps think about is profit! Do you have a family, Anderson? Would you even know what to do with one if you did? I bet not. You'd run a cost benefit analysis on them to see if they were worth keeping around."

Anderson: "Kaltorans, always so sentimental. I give up. Even if your goal is to find them, being all weepy isn't going to help." (Anderson walks away).

When the team asks to see the files on Sierra Team, as they no doubt will, Nathaniel (a pregen character) or any other PC of the GM's choice recognizes one of them, Jezebel Slip. He was previously engaged in a love affair with Slip. According to the files, she is now married to another member of the team.

Praxus also sent his entire Legion security force with the team to ensure their safety. As a Legion himself, he bears responsibility for his brothers in arms. Praxus was ordered to stay on Archimedes, but he now violates that order to help rescue his combat brothers. He insists on accompanying the team to the surface.

"I'm coming with you. Those are my men down there, not yours. I sent them down. I'll bring them back up, if only their remains. Don't give me any resistance. This is between combat brothers. We've seen campaigns together you folks can only dream of."

The Plan

Tartarus is a small outpost located on one of the peninsulas of the Star continent of Mishpacha. In other terms, it is way out in the boonies. If the team has anything other than a very small ship, there is no place to dock it in Tartarus. Sarah Vortice suggests the team take one of Archimedes shuttles in this case.

Once below, the team must find a guide and pursue the trail of Team Sierra's last known vector. The team is to give reports every fourteen hours.



Praxus	Hit	End Dmg	Crit	Rng	Clips	Ammo	Load	RoF	Type & Variation	Cost	Movement	Defence	Armour	Bodies
Assault Rifle	+2	Ч	4	4	Ч	8	1	2 (+1d6)	Companion, Gun	-	Ч	14	Ч	1
	Lock On	+2, Strong Hit	Inspire	(Attack, Hit)) All Allies	within sigh	nt gain a l	Recovery.						
	Slots: 4,	Defence vs S	tealth: 10	. Defence v	rs Impair: 2	20								

Mishpacha – Outpost Tartarus

Regardless of what vessel the PCs take from Archimedes, they must land at Tartarus. The jungle is too thick everywhere else. There are no clear landing zones.

Tartarus is surrounded by a sophisticated laser fence keeping the jungle at bay. Even the mutant plants designed to kill cannot get through the fence – at least not yet. This provides a relatively small compound for people to live.

Tartarus is a tough place. Those who live here tend to be expatriates from one of the major factions in Haven. Some are wanted: some just have nothing to go back to. They run a few bars, shops, and a gambling den. All are either surplus colonial structures or pieces of ships that crashed here long ago. The entire place feels interstitial.

Rusting hulks of vessels downed during the Great War now form the greater part of Tartarus. These once-mighty ships have been stripped and repurposed as permanent shelters and businesses. What isn't remade from the war is covered with surplus colonial tech at least a decade old. All of it is covered by a green moss with pollen floats through the laser fence to alight on these corroding structures. Weak neon signs advertise Corporation beers, a General Store, and even a brothel. This is a tough town for tough customers. You cannot imagine the scientists felt comfortable here.

Indeed, they did not. Upon debarking, the PCs are immediately beset by a motley group of more than 10 people offering to act as porters or guides to town in exchange for their equipment,or discounts at the local businesses. The economy here is almost entirely dependent on researchers funded by various parties. No one in their right mind comes to this peninsula for vacation.

Locations in Tartarus

This small outpost has quite few dubious looking homes and a handful of businesses.

Barga's Bar

Barga is a Nephilim Emissary who claims she went rogue. In fact, she did not. The Nephilim see value in having Emissaries in the far-flung reaches of Haven. Someday, they believe, vast areas of Mishpacha will be resettled. Having Emissaries there before that time can only be a good thing.

Barga ,herself, has been genetically modified so she cannot really get drunk. No matter how much she drinks, she never gets sloppy. Everyone in town tells the PCs she can drink them under the table.

Barga's is located in a former cargo module air-dropped during the war. Maybe 15 people can fit inside comfortably. Guides tend to hang out here looking for patrons. (See guides below).

Bed and Brake Fast

This B&B has none of the quaint charm one would find in proper colonies. It's housed in the front end of a Kaltoran cruiser that

was shot down during the Great War. Its three stories connect to other residences in town via rope bridges and plans built from whatever is handy.

The proprietors are two middle-age Kaltorans who serve a mean stew with a side of lore from the Great War. At the GM's discretion, they may know something about the structure Sierra Team sought.

If asked, they remember Sierra Team. They stayed for two nights, hired a guide, and left. Several times the couple heard members of the team arguing loudly, though they could not say over what or who was doing the fighting.

Adam's Eves

Adam is a former Corp. He was a minor executive in one of the Corporation's skein of subsidiaries. Somewhere along the line his career stalled out. He might have run off with some sensitive data too, He'll tell you about that depending on how much he drinks.

Adam bounced around Haven for a while before finding a lucrative business in "providing gentleman with quality female companionship." Unfortunately, Adam didn't scope the criminal underworld well enough and stepped on some toes. He was run out of all major areas of space transit.

So, he took some of the girls loyal to him and offered a 30/70 split (in his favor of course). He runs ads outside of Tartarus and has connections planet wide. He doesn't make a fortune, but he and the girls are saving to go back into business as partners (35/65 this time) in a civilized spot. He won't be run off again.

The Legion security troops entertained some of Adam's fine Eves. The Eves and the Legion had some "pillow talk" in which the Legion soldiers revealed they were headed into the jungles with some "damn scientists." They expected to encounter Feral Nephilim and looked forward to engaging them in combat.

Sherriff's Office and Jail

Sherriff Brockmeyer is the law in town. A former Corporate security specialist, he arrived on Tartarus more than ten years ago. He cleaned the town up of its lawless ways and imposed some order.

He's tough, and he's mean, but he remains fair. His office is small with an equally small jail. Sherriff Brockmeyer did not come here by accident. The Corporation sent him, but he pretends to have been fired from Yoyodyne. His orders are to gain the trust of the locals and evaluate the viability of Tartarus as a potential major port.

The jail can hold ten people in uncomfortable, crowded conditions.

Radio Tower

An old-fashioned radio tower protrudes from one of the buildings. A local DJ spins music from this locale. This tower has little relevance to the team now but may become important later in the adventure.

Space Docks

Tartarus hosts a make-shift space dock left over from the war. When the citizens first found it, the dock was covered in jungle growth. They have since cut that back and exposed the rusting landing decks.

There are about six small ships here at any given time.

Guides

Aside from buying equipment at the general store, the PCs most likely are looking for a guide. Guides not only lead "Fluffs"—what they call outsiders to Mishpacha—they also help them spot those plants that could kill them. In addition, they have a decent understanding of the Feral Nephilim Tribes in the area.

The team has three guides to choose from. Another two to four are currently guiding other suckers – that is "clients" – out into the boonies.

Thorpe

Thorpe is a Corporate who was stranded on Mishpacha over 20 years ago. The jungle and Feral Nephilim killed the team of which he was a part. Thorpe alone survived and, in the intervening years, became a guide. He also became a Purple Lotus addict. He functions, but his eyes are always hazy.

Thorpe has no secret ulterior motives. He wants money and the opportunity to find more Purple Lotus. He'll state this flat out. Any lotus found is his. That is considered a part of his fee. He still charges, of course.

"Lotus dreams are the best. That virtual reality everyone is on about? Rubbish. You can see it's fake if you look closely enough. Ah! But wire your brain to make the virtual reality. Well, there you go then, eh? No, I don't hallucinate. Yes, I can guide you to where you need to go, but any lotus plants we find are mine, hear? You Fluffs wouldn't know what to do with them anyway."

Cicero

To the Legion Cicero, the only good Neph is a dead Neph. He hates them with a passion. Any Nephs in the group find racial slurs flung at them by Cicero.

Cicero's prejudice comes from a personal place. He once fought the Nephilim under Corporation contract. In one battle, he was injured badly. His leg was torn up, and he now walks with a pronounced limp. After that, he wasn't going to fight for the Legion Auxilia anymore. He blames the Neph.

He is loud, prone to telling boisterous tales about his combat exploits, and handy in a fight.

"Nephs exist to kill. X'ion left them behind so we could 'ave target practice on 'em, yeah? Present company, you know, excluded or whatever."

Marissa Fine

This Kaltoran comes across as a cute techie. She knows her way around engines and almost any other technology. She's fun to be around, flirty, and a Kaltoran informant. No one knows the latter.

Marissa is living in Tartarus to monitor who goes into the jungle and what they bring back. The Fine family tribe is weighing the potential of this peninsula on the Star continent. Marissa gets information from both scans and the people who go out into the jungle. She'll use all her charms to get intelligence from the PCs, if she deems them in possession of something worthwhile.

When not working as a guide, she fixes things around Tartarus for a living. Her racial memory has some inkling of a structure out on the edge of the peninsula, but it is vague. She has no idea that Mechonids or the quantum cube reside inside.

"It's just grease on my hands, cutie. It isn't going to kill you. Might toughen you up a bit, even. Y'all grew up above water I bet. Must be nice, not having to worry about a leak turning into a torrent. I see your scanner there is factory fresh. I can mod that you know. Give it here..."

Humping the Boonies

Once the PCs have gathered intelligence in Tartarus and obtained a guide, they may proceed into the jungle. This is where the real danger begins. If the team decided to forgo any guide, their chance of encountering feral Nephilim or killer plants is significantly increased. It is a three-day hike to Team Sierra's basecamp. Roll three times per day for an encounter. There is a 15% chance with a guide and a 30% without. Players may also make survival rolls to reduce an encounter chance by 5%.

The Mechonids have set a trap. These are very intelligent electronic life forms with a great deal of combat experience. The only thing going in the player's favor is that the Mechonids have been in stasis mode so long. They do not have all their faculties about them.

The Mechonid threat lies ahead. However, the menaces native to Mishpacha are what the PCs must contend with first.

What's Going on With Communication?

The Mechonid Acolytes are intercepting Sierra Team's transmissions, but there is more to it than that. One of the team – a Seeker cult plant (Cain) – brought a special piece of equipment to wake some of the Mechonids inside the "tomb." He used the frequency Rachel Colson received aboard Archimedes.

When the Mechonids were sealed inside the Archon facility, the Archons used the cube to erect a field that prevented the Mechonids from getting out of the tomb or sending through communications. The Seekers spent many years creating an item that could, briefly, pierce the field and deliver a message. That message woke the Mechonids.

Now, the Mechonids cannot drop the field. They are still trapped. What they have managed to do is extend the range of the field. That is, it's getting bigger. Imagine the field as a giant bubble encompassing the whole of the tomb and the underground beneath it.

The Mechonids that woke have been making that bubble larger. On the surface, it would look like a hemisphere. The camp lies inside the field, blocking all communications. The field also bounces back the communications from Team Sierra. The Mechonids have been replying as if they were Archimedes Station.

The PCs may not even notice they crossed the field, just that something very weird occurred. If they contact the surface, the Mechonids intercept that message (it bounces off the shield) and fake a response. For example:

"Roger, Ground Team. We registered an anomaly on the surface as well. We believe the point of origin is in the direction of Team Sierra's camp."

They are trapped on Mishpacha until they shut down the field. Doing so, ironically, also releases the Mechonids from their bondage

On the Way to Camp: Encounters

The following encounters are designed for the GM to drop on the players as they traverse the jungle for three days. Remember, the camp's communications are being intercepted. If the team tries to contact them, the communication does not go through.

The following encounters provide not only flavor for Mishpacha: they give the PCs the opportunity to gain valuable allies for the rest of the adventure.

For the first day only, the team can communicate with the real

Archimedes Station. After that, such communication halts, as the PC's enter the disruptor field.

That Which Does Not Kill You... Will Try Again

Mishpacha is a world full of danger. The war left behind not only tribes of feral Nephilim but mutated, weaponized plant life. This encounter occurs when the PCs feel relatively at ease.

A large feral chieftain welded a few disparate tribes into an effective force. The PCs happen to have stumbled into their territory. Feeling that this is their territory, and they thus have the advantage, this small scouting party attacks the team.

However, as an intelligent chieftain leads them, they don't merely fall upon the group in a headlong rush. Instead, they employ a rather sophisticated strategy. Whether it works or not is up to the PCs.

The scouting party consists of:

xl Wazp Group x2 Spitter Groups xl Chieftain

Theatre of the Mind Combat: Evenly Matched (12+).

The trained Wazps are sent in first. The chieftain wants the PCs off-balance when the Spitters attack. The Wazps fly in, distract the team, then fly up and away as the Spitters launch ranged attacks.

The chieftain backs them up as they attempt to drive the PCs toward a section of the jungle inhabited by mutated plants. With acid-spitting monsters and poisonous bugs flying around, taking cover seems like a good idea.

Yet the cover available is infested with tangle vines, a product of the Great War. These vines grapple anyone entering the area, attempting to restrain them and then consume them with acidic digestive fluids.

If the chieftain would die, he permanently reduces his Fate by 1 to miraculously save his life (allowing him to be captured).

If the chieftain is captured, a Nephilim might be able to communicate with him. If so, he is defiant, saying that the PCs have no business here and accusing them of being hired by the Idoz Clan. The Idoz Clan believe only pure-strain Nephilim deserve life. They appear in the next encounter. Interrogating the chieftain reveals that his tribe and the Idoz are at war. While his tribe conquered this territory, the Idoz have no respect for boundaries. All they care about is purity.

Tying Into the Main Plot

Aiding this tribe gains the team valuable allies (or bulletstoppers) against the Mechonids. They are a dangerous threat, and having more bodies makes the survival of the PCs more likely.

Natural Selection

The Idoz Clan still fights the Great War. They believed in the genetic superiority of the Nephilim with a zealotry rarely seen. They are a brutal and uncompromising entity. See page 22 of the Antagonist Archive for details.

This particular group numbers about 50 in total, though the encounter does not throw that many at the PCs! These Idoz are relatively new arrivals on Mishpacha. They believe that Mishpacha belongs to the Nephilim and have been weeding out the impure and forming an army.

This plan is in its nascent stages. They are far from forming an army, but they have set up a base. For the most part, the Idoz scouts the tribes around them and either gets them to join their cause or goes to war with them.

Unlike the other Feral Tribes, the Idoz have advanced biological weapons. They are direct match for a well-armed group.

The other feral tribes have not quite figured out what the Idoz truly represent. They believe any creature with such weapons must be in league with the Idoz. They are therefore suspicious of the PCs.

The Idoz do not tolerate non-Nephilim on Mishpacha. Upon spying the team, they set up an ambush at a strategic point ahead of the group. They are zealots, but their larger goal of re-taking all of Mishpacha supersedes their willingness to die. If the team is winning, the Idoz fall back to their camp.

Tying Into the Main Plot

If the PCs help attack the Idoz, they gain allies. If not, the war continues without them.

A Local Little War

This encounter is entirely optional but adds to the flavor of Mishpacha. As outlined above, the Idoz and the feral tribe are at war. While this has nothing to do with the PC's goal directly, it is a situation they can exploit to their advantage. The feral chieftain and the Idoz keep attacking the team on the way to Team Sierra's camp. This eventually starts to erode morale and possibly personnel. The team can certainly push through hoping to avoid further encounters, or they can side with the feral tribes.

The feral tribes are territorial, but they respect strength. If the team defeat their scouting party, the tribe understand that they are powerful. That does not mean they don't want revenge, their leader wants to defeat the Idoz more. The two parties can strike a deal.

The feral tribe houses themselves in the camouflaged hulk of a Kaltoran cruiser from the Great War. The Idoz raid them constantly, but have yet to make a full assault. The tribe wants to make an assault first, but they lack both the weapons and the knowledge to use them. The PCs have both.

If the team is willing to help the tribe raid the Idoz clan basecamp, the tribe agrees to guide the team to the Sierra Camp safely. This means no further Survival skill checks need be rolled.

There are about 65 Feral Tribesmen and 50 Idoz. Use the optional rules for Large Scale Combat on pages 304-306 of the Fragged Empire Core Book.

Theatre of the Mind Combat: Evenly Matched (12+).

With the PC's help, the feral tribe should be able to overcome the technological advantage of the Idoz. As mentioned above, this gives the PCs the feral tribe as allies.

The Feral Nephilim are happy to send warriors along with the PCs to help them locate the lost scientists (and fight the Mechonids). These warriors will act as Companions under the PCs control.

Guide	Hit	End Dmg	Crit	Rng	Clips	Ammo	Load	RoF	Type & Variation	Cost	Movement	Defence	Armour	Bodies
Rifle	+2	3	Ч	5	Ч	Ч	2]*	Companion, Gun	-	Ч	16	2	1
	Lock On	+2, Energy, *3	Strong H	it (5–6) with	all RoF 1	Attack Rolls	S.							
	Slots: 2,	Defence vs S	tealth: 12	2, Defence v	s Impair: 1	8								
Feral Nephilim Warrior	Hit	End Dmg	Crit	Rng	Clips	Ammo	Load	RoF	Type & Variation	Cost	Movement	Defence	Armour	Bodies
Poison Blade	+2	4 +Bodies	3	-	-	-	1	1 +Bodie	s Companion, Melee	-	6	14	2	Ч
	Strong H	it: Poison (Hit)	Non Ro	bot Target ta	akes 3 End	durance Dan	nage at t	he Start ol	f their Turn until they	receive	Paramedics	or Extend	ed Care (P	oison
	Effe	ct can Stack	up to 4	times).										
	Slots: 3,	Defence vs S	tealth: 10), Defence v	s Impair: 1	17								



Suggested Battle Map





Enemy Type: Henchmen

Strong H	it: Poison (Hit) M	5	5	– are behind u	2	1+Rodies	Melee, I. C. S Poison	1	<u>^</u>								
Strong H	it: Poison (Hit) M	5	5	are behind u		i boules		1	6	16	1	8					
5		Von Robot Targ		Bio Tech, Natural, Slow, Gain Strong Hit (5-6) if you are behind your Target, *+2 Damage vs Targets at O Endurance,													
cire		p to 4 times).	et takes 3 En	durance Dan	nage at th	ne Start of	their Turn until the	y receive	Paramedics	or Extend	ed Care (Po	oison					
Slots: 3,		alth: 12, Defend	e vs Impair: "	19													
Traits: Critter (o	an Fly), Swarm																
Spitter Hit	End Dmg	Crit Rng	Clips	Ammo	Load	RoF	Type & Variation	Cost	Movement	Defence	Armour	Bodies					
Acid Spit –2	3+Bodies	ч ч	Ч	RoF x6	1	1+Bodies	Gun, B S, A Acid	2	6	14	3	5					
Splash 1	Bio Tech, Natu	ral, Small, Burr	, Modification	s: Personali	sed, Low (Quality.											
Slots: 3.	Defence vs Ste	alth: 10, Defeno	e vs Impair:	17													
Traits: Critter (A	ble to function	in poisonous e	nvironments),														
Amass (Strong Hit: Am	ass (Attack, Hi) Gain +1 Bod	ly (may nev	er have n	nore than	6 above your starti	ng Bodie	s)).								

Str 3 1	Foc 2 4	Defence:	10 + Ref + (2) = 15 +Cover	Armour: (3 +	- 3	End: 10+(Str x5)+ = 25
Ref 3 2 Mov 2 3	Int 2 5 Per 2 6	vs Impair vs Psionic	$Def+Str + \bigcirc = \textcircled{B}$ $Def+Foc + \bigcirc = \textcircled{17}$	vs Energy vs Slow	÷Õ ÷Õ	RecoveryFoc $*$ (1) = 3 Stealth $2 + \text{Ref } *$ (2) = $(+5)$
	Fate	vs Stealth *+#Allies (max: 10)	$10 + \text{Per} + (4) = (16)^*$	at O Endurance	-Ŏ	Req: Cover Land Combat Order Int + C = 2

Weapon (Pick One)	Hit	End Dmg	Crit	Rng	Clips	Ammo	Load	RoF	Wgt	Type & Variation	Cost
Axe	+5	5	5	-	-	-	1	1	2	Melee, Composite	1
	Bio Tech,	Pen 2 min ^L	l, Modifica	tions: Mast	er Crafted	(lost on De	ath), Pers	onalised.			
Acid Spit	-1	6	Ч	5	3	6	1	2 (+1d6)	3	Gun	3
	Slow, Jam	(1-3), Natu	ral, Pen 4	min 3, Max	imum Rar	ige = Rng x	5 (normal	lly Rng x10),	Modific	ation: Personalised.	

Race / Var / Trait	Requirements	Benefits
NPC Nephilim		
Big Game Hunter	Skilled NPC	
Extravagant	NPC	

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Episode Two: The Camp

This episode focuses primarily on the backstory and personalities of Team Sierra. The group is an eclectic mix, but tensions are high. The researchers all have different motivations, as do the three Legion security quards.

As the site is difficult to access, the campsite is a small distance away.

The Camp

The Legion has put up motion detectors outside the perimeter of the camp. If Praxus is with the team, he can point these out. If not, the Legion likely detects the team as they breach the sensor perimeter.

As far as Team Sierra knows they have been in constant contact with Archimedes Station. They aren't expecting a rescue team. This could devolve into a firefight if the PCs aren't careful. Legion guards assume anything breaking the perimeter roughly the size of a humanoid is a threat. If they see their commander, Praxus, they stand down.

Hopefully, the PCs and the guards do not fight. The guards keep an eye on the team if they are alone, however. They ask for their weapons and lead them to the camp.

The camp itself is made of micro Fuller Dome style tents. Inside these are sleeping areas and specialized sensor equipment. Coolers, other equipment, personal items and a small hovercraft is also found.

Flying about the camp like dutiful pets are a number of small robots (the Mechonid Acolytes). See pg: 24 for more information on them.

Currently, two members of the team are off surveying the site. They left three hours ago via a hovrcraft and were going to spend the day there. Later that night, it becomes apparent the two team members were overdue. In fact, they are dead. They found a way to open the tomb and were killed by Mechonids. Of course, no one yet knows this.

Team Sierra

The following is a list of the members of team Sierra. Each has their own motives. How these motives align or impede the PCs is something the GM must determine. See the sidebar on running this diverse group.

Jenna Riser

Jenna is the nominal leader of Team Sierra. While she is officially "in charge," the specialists on the team are accustomed to debating and deciding as a group. Jenna is not a natural leader. She is a brilliant scientist and has focused all of her efforts on academic pursuits. As a Kaltoran child, she grew up in one of the undersea pit cities where she studied intensely.

Jenna wants to get inside the tomb more than anything. She has an obsession with the Archons and knows this could be a major breakthrough – possibly one of the greatest discoveries of the post-war period.

The field of archaeology is burgeoning right now, and Jenna is one of the purely curious academics whose eyes widen at the thought of lost knowledge. She is very eager. She knows there have been some static issues and such during communications with the Archimedes station, but she has no idea that it is anything more than a glitch. Jenna posits that the communication problem results from the technology inside the Archon temple.

Her research indicates that a great Archon warrior named Zalos was entombed here with much honor and fanfare. She has the story wrong.

"We are on the verge of one of the greatest discoveries in the post-war period. I don't know why you think we are missing, or why Archimedes isn't receiving our signals, and I don't care. This is bigger than us. If even one of us can uncover the secrets of this tomb, it's worth the rest of our lives. Science is built on blood. You might not have the racial memory to know that, but I do. We stand on the shoulders of great Kaltorans long dead. My name – that is my team's names – will go down in history as the first to begin to understand the Archons. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have business to attend to. You found us. Go back and tell the station but leave us alone."

Jezebel Slip

This Kaltoran is the former lover of one of the PCs. The two had a passionate, multi-year relationship some while ago. She has since married Daniel Slip and taken his name – quite a scandal for a Kaltoran to marry outside their species!

The chemistry between her and the PC is immediately palpable. Daniel doesn't like it at all. How they parted is up to the GM, but something less than amicable builds better tension. Regardless, unresolved feelings remain between them like cobwebs one can never seem to clear away.

Jezebel is a good friend to both Sarah Vortice and Jenna. She wants to get into the tomb almost as much as Jenna does.

Jezebel also notes, if asked, that Sarah seemed unlike herself during recent communications. She attributes this to stress. In fact, it is the result of the Mechonid impersonation. They cannot readily replicate complex behavior.

Tension between Jezebel, the PC, and Daniel should begin upon meeting and ramp up at an exponential rate.

"I always knew I'd see you again. You turn up at all the wrong times. I'm married now. Do you understand? Yes... yes... of course I remember. Yes, it was lovely, but it's over. By the Archons, you haven't changed at all! It isn't always about you! Just don't aggravate Daniel, alright? If you ever loved me, let me have my new life. He's stable. I can count on him. You were always running off after some crazy adventure, weren't you? I was never enough."

Daniel Slip

Daniel Slip is a Vagarti xenobiologist married to Jezebel Slip. He loves her, but he has a mean streak of jealousy inside. He and the PC that used to be involved with Jezebel automatically dislike each other. This rivalry can continue to ratchet up tension as the team is hunted by the Mechonids in later episodes.

The rivalry may get so bad that, coupled with the threat of being killed, Daniel tries to kill his rival. Running from killer robots can do strange things to the mind.

"You were a vagrant then and a vagrant now. Leave my wife alone. Do you know how much you hurt her? No, you don't care because you're a selfish bastard. Well, I'm looking after her now. You keep away from both of us. I'm not afraid of you. Do you hear me? You don't scare me at all."

Solomon Ketch

A Kaltoran archaeologist and tech specialist, Ketch is fascinated with the Acolyte robots. They zip about the camp in a friendly, almost cute manner. Ketch doesn't think they're cute, though. He sees them as something on which to experiment. He's been using frequency modulation to "torture" the seemingly hapless creatures. While they are electronic life, Ketch doesn't think they are sentient. He's the sort of person that would torture a dog using the same excuse. Reclusive and a bit crazy, Ketch has been studying the Acolytes intently and is unaware that, in reality, they are studying him.

"Fascinating creatures, are they not? The way they hang about us like faithful pets. Of course, as a scientist, I have to be open to experimentation. One cannot learn about a species without prodding them a bit, if you see my meaning. Just because they are cute does not mean we should shrink from our scientific duty. I have mind to take one apart bit by bit in the next few days. That is the only way to truly understand a thing, after all."

Cain Colson

Cain Colson is allegedly married to Rachel Colson, Archimedes communications officer. In reality, both are Seeker cultists. Cain is the team's medic and also a xeno-anthropologist. He is more than fascinated with the Acolytes: he sees them as servitors of his gods.

Colson has placed a device inside one of the sensors that opened a "tunnel" in the Archon field allowing him to wake the Acolytes and others within the tomb. He knows the Acolytes are studying them. He also knows that he must find the mysterious cube and activate it using Legion DNA. He has collected samples from Sierra Team as part of routine medical checks. He may try to do so from the PCs as well. The DNA from the Legion guards is not the DNA he needs. Only a Legion PC or Praxus has "commander" DNA needed to unlock the cube. If necessary, Cicero the guide may have been captured to get the needed DNA. This is the least desirable path to opening the cube though.

Cain Colson is more than willing to die for his gods.

"Oh, no! You mean Rachel doesn't know I'm alright. Oh... my poor wife. I knew I shouldn't have left, but she insisted. 'Go find out what's down there, Cain' she said. She's so obsessed with science she can sometimes forget what's really important. Do you think we should leave now? Can you get a message to Rachel? Oh, why did I agree to come? Dr. Alcomb got sick the night before, and I filled in. (Sigh) I shouldn't have left my family. Look, if there's anything I can do to help, let me know. I just want to see my wife again. This planet is a scientific wonder, but it scares me. If I'm being honest, that tomb scares me..."

Daniel Slip	Hit	End Dmg	Crit	Rng	Clips	Ammo	Load	RoF Type & Variation	Cost	Movement	Defence	Armour	Bodies
SMG	+2	Ч	3	3	3	12	1	3 (+2d6) Gun	1	Ч	16	Ч	1
	Low Tech												
	Slots: 3, (Defence vs S	itealth: 12	. Defence v	vs Impair: '	19							

Darius, Andrium and Kelvia

These three are Legion. Kelvia is female. Tasked with the safety of Team Sierra, they remain vigilant at all times. They will not abandon the team unless things become very bad. This could happen in future episodes. If Praxus is with the team, the other Legion guards are much less likely to break and run.

"Soma IV, now THAT was a campaign. The tundra lit up with the flares of the bombs. We liked that quite a bit, huh, boys? This babysitting science types, it's not war is it? Nah, it's just a spot of work. We haven't even gotten to shoot one 'o them Feral Nephs yet!"

Managing So Many NPCs

It is no small task for a GM to manage so many disparate personalities. The GM needs to go deep into a faux-schizoid improv technique to make each come alive. Lending them different voices and physical quirks can help.

After reading through the adventure, the GM may wish to note which NPCs they like best and which motivations add the most dramatic tension to the game. For example, Cain Colson's inevitable betrayal is a necessary plot element, but the rivalry between Daniel Slip and one of the PCs is not.

Once the Mechonids attack – and continue to do so – every NPC has a chance of breaking save Cain Colson. He is a zealot. The rest of the group are primarily academics and not prepared for combat. Only the Legion guards are ready to fight. No one is ready for the Mechonids. One hasn't been seen in a hundred years.

In stress, true natures begin to surface. Thus each of the NPCs may revert to their worst instincts. Solomon will do anything to save his own hide. Daniel Slip may decide to kill his PC rival. Jenna may breakdown altogether, unable to believe the Archons would visit such destruction upon her.

There is an element of horror to this adventure. The team and the NPCs are all trapped, being taken out one-by-one. It's a game of cat and mouse, and they are very much the mice. Decide how you want the NPCs to react to the deteriorating situation, and then watch for the PCs reactions. Play off those to create a believable tension of conflicting personalities.

Cain in This Episode

While the primary antagonists in Genetic Spectres are the Mechonids, they are personified by the Seeker cult spy, Cain Colson. The Mechonids are inhuman by nature. It therefore helps to paint a human face on them. That face is Cain.

His goal is the cube. In his head, the Seekers have implanted small implants that allow him to crudely interact with the cube.

Possibly, the cult received this technology from the Mechonids themselves. That lies beyond the scope of this adventure. What is crucial is to realize Cain as a character and, ultimately, a villain. His ultimate betrayal only has weight if the PCs have come to know him.

In this episode, Cain builds trust. Perhaps he even saves a PC's life during the course of the adventure. He does all he can to ingratiate himself while trying to seem innocuous. He uses modified comms to communicate with and "scan" the tomb.

Cain is also very smart and immediately picks up on the rivalry between one of the PC's and Daniel Slip. Cain uses this observation to insert suspicions about Daniel where he feels appropriate. For example, if the PCs somehow discover Cain messing with the comms at night, he says he woke and saw Daniel doing something to them. He may even "discover" the item of Mechonid tech he slipped in the comms himself.

For now, Cain needs the PCs. He cannot simply truck into the jungle and tomb on his own.



Playing Jezebel and Daniel Slip in This Episode

The love triangle between Daniel, Jezebel, and one of the PCs serves as an emotional subplot. It also works to throw suspicion off Cain and confuse matters. Daniel is a jealous man. Play him as such. He is blunt, gruff, and not at all a social charmer. Where Cain has natural charisma, Daniel is aloof.

As GM, you want the PCs to like Cain and dislike Daniel. The rivalry for Jezebel naturally plays into this. Any suspicions brought to her are immediately dismissed as "jealous paranoia."

If Cain plays things well enough, he may be able to pry open the divide between husband and wife further.

The Acolytes

The Mechonid Acolytes are the main enemy in this episode, though the PCs do not know it yet. To all appearances, the Mechonids are friendly and not terribly bright. Ketch estimates they possess the intellect of a pet at best.

Jenna believes they were buried with the Archon to serve him in death. They would have maintained the tomb and ensured the Archon's life was remembered. Of course, she has found no way to really communicate with them.

Jenna made the decision to study the Acolyets before proceeding to the tomb. She has the location, given to her by more precise scans from Sarah Vortice on Archimedes. This should raise questions from the players, for when they left the station there were no such detailed scans.

Sarah Vortice (as impersonated by the Archons) claimed the tomb lit up, "as if it wanted us to know where it is." This is the work of the still-waking Prophet.

The PCs can examine the Acolytes as they wish. Programing or Psychology Skill Rolls of outstanding success may reveal they are smarter than they seem. Likewise, reviewing the recordings of messages from Archimedes shows they may have been faked. PCs with good technical skills may discover that the outgoing signals from the camp, and the team's own comm equipment, is bouncing off something far above them.

All this leads to the Acolyte's being discovered for what they are – spies. Once their cover is blown, they attack.

The Acolyte's Attack

In the early dusk, the little robots flit about like fireflies. They are rather cute in the way they spin patterns in the air. Solomon is squinting at a screen like he cannot believe what he is reading. You're about to inquire what he sees when the robots snap into a delta formation, it's spear-like tip pointed directly at the center of camp. Your heart is flooded with adrenaline before your mind even realizes what is happening – the robots are about to attack!

Lighting quick, they strike. Beams of energy lance through the jungle. Someone screams. A tent is vaporized. A console explodes as a laser finds its screen. Your hands automatically find the grips of your weapons. The Legion guards are already moving. What looked like an innocent encounter with the Archon's servants just turned into a fight for your lives!

Suggested Encounter (for 4 PCs):

x2 Mechonid Zeal Acolyte Groups x2 Mechonid Sacrament Acolyte Groups

Theatre of the Mind Combat: Out Matched (14+).

The combat likely takes the team and NPCs unaware. The Acolytes hit them where it hurts. They have had some time to study the camp and the team. They concentrate their fire on the PCs or NPCs most able to fight them. They plan to clean up the survivors after the warriors are killed. This means they kill the Legion guards and combat-oriented PCs first. They pay special attention to killing Solomon as his experiments on them may have given him knowledge of their inner workings. They do not fire on Cain Colson, though this probably goes unnoticed in the heat of combat. Note: Cain's implants alert him to the imminent attack. He may use this opportunity to "save" one of the PC's lives, thus earning their trust.

After the combat, the PCs have but a few minutes of rest (allow more with possible access to the camps medical facilities if they are heavily injured) before they receive a static-laced, panicked communication from the Tartarus outpost. It is a Mayday message. In the background, the PCs hear the distinct sounds of weapons fire and the screams of death.

The voice is that of the Sherriff's deputy.

"They're everywhere. We need help! Oh, frag! Please, someone hear this and send help. We can't hold out! (Static and gunfire end the message)".

The PCs can see smoke off in the horizon from Tartarus.

All the scientists are scared except Colson who fakes it. They need a leader. Praxus may serve in this role if the PCs do not step up.

Contacting Archimedes Station is no longer possible, as the Acolytes are not spoofing messages. The team can attempt to raise a signal from Tartarus. If they are successful, they get someone else on the comm who is also very scared. One of the girls from Adam's Eves could work well here.

The Mechonids have also extended the field. They cannot break it yet, but they were able to extend it so Tartarus cannot communicate off-world. This is a well-coordinated attack. The Mechonids are killers but not mindless ones.

Whatever NPC they manage to get on the horn details the attackers a little bit. They look like robots, some sort of artificial life. Depending on the GM's campaign to date, the PCs may have heard tales of Mechonids. The adventure is designed with the assumption that the PCs have only heard stories about Mechonids. They do not know what they are capable of or what they are.

A Fine Mess

The PCs are in a precarious position. They probably rightly assume that the Mechonid Acolytes are not alone. If the PCs do not think of it, Praxus or another Legion points out that the Acolytes appeared to be scout interceptors. This means they likely only served to recon for an attack by something much more potent.

Praxus: "That wasn't meant to kill us but distract us. And these little things did not cause those screams from Tartarus. We're going to be attacked by something much worse. We can't stay here. Our only option is to move. They know the exact layout of our camp. Damnit! Why didn't I see it before? They were gathering intelligence on us all the time. What do I mean 'something much worse?' I mean we're screwed if whatever those things were working for is as bad as I think they are".

Praxus' pronouncement does not calm anyone. In fact, it has the opposite effect. The scientists begin to panic. The Legion, of course, do not. By now, the two team members are overdue. Praxus has made it clear the camp is completely compromised. Team Sierra is in the middle of the jungle being hunted by an unknown enemy.

Here, the GM needs to build tension. Don't show the Mechonid warriors just yet. Build them up. Have NPCs start to breakdown – scientists are not ready for this. Imagine a scene from a scary movie where the monster has yet to be revealed.

Only the chirping of insects now against an otherwise quiet night. But something is out there. Something very old. Jezebel clings to Daniel. Solomon is talking to himself. Jenna sits on the ground reciting math proofs. They are breaking down. Only Praxus and his Legions move about the camp with purpose while gathering necessary supplies.

Building Tension

If the GM has access to some tense or foreboding music, now is a good time to play it. Also, consider counting down from 100 aloud. Ask the players what they are doing and then continue counting down. This builds tension at the table. If the players feel they have to act before the countdown ends, that transfers to the game world. At the number 50, tell them they hear something in the jungle, and then continue counting down. The team has two broad pathways to take from here. One is to head directly toward the tomb. The other is to go back to Tartarus and get the hell out of Dodge. At this point, the team knows their comms are being blocked. Perhaps, they realize there is a field around them. In fact, it has enlarged since the team was in camp and now encompasses Tartarus as well. The Mechonids do not want any biological life outside the field to know they are awake.

The team may want to get out of Dodge but quick. That means they need to go back to Tartarus to leave Mishpacha. Also, any wounded team members may need more medical supplies than the camp has on hand.

The team heard the Mechonids attack Tartarus, so they may be leery of returning. However, there are no spaceships out here in the jungle. Further, they may recall the radio tower seen upon arrival. They may reason the tower could boost their signal, so that they might reach Archimedes. That won't work, but it is a reasonable plan.

Cain accompanies them either way. He is unsure what threats lie inside the Archon tomb and wants bodies to take the brunt of any Mechonid attack. Once he has control of the Mechonids using the cube, he won't be worried. Up until that point, however, he is as much a target as anyone. The Mechonids destroy ALL biological life. That includes those who worship them as gods.

Transportation

Any of the members of Sierra Team can tell the team that the two missing archaeologists took a hovercraft to the tomb and the camp a second hovercraft. That vehicle could expedite

their passage back to Tartarus. The hovercraft sits just outside the camp. It is fuelled and functioning.

Tartarus Redux

has

When the team returns to Tartarus, they find the outpost a smoking ruin. Laser scorches mar the buildings still standing. The ships in port are ruined. The PC's ship is damaged but not beyond repair.

Curiously, there are no bodies.

The Tartarus Outpost was already the product of various wrecks and jerry rigging, and the battle that took place here reduced that chaos to even more ruin. Columns of smoke rise from a few buildings and some of the ships in port. Everything is quiet and still. It takes your minds a moment to realize this battlefield is missing a key element—the dead. Not one body appears amidst the tangles of steel and carbon that was once the sole piece of civilization on this peninsula. Where are all the dead?

There are no bodies because the Mechonids used their biological disintegration weapons. Successful sensor checks show remnant traces of organic material.

The Field

The field causing technological issues comes from the cube. The Archons used it to trap the Mechonids inside the tomb. It has worked for over 100 years in that capacity. It also prevents any communications from getting inside or out of the bubble of the field. The human-made quantum cube generates the field itself. The Archons did not have a full understanding of how this artifact worked.

When the PCs first arrived on Mishpacha, the field was smaller, encompassing the tomb and the camp—perhaps a radius of 50 kilometers. As the Mechonid Acolytes analyze Sierra Team, those left behind in the tomb work on expanding the diameter of the field itself.

The Prophet wants no biological life leaving the area. By the time the team reaches Tartarus again, the comms do not even turn on, and all other sensors give false readings.

The GM can use this to scare the PCs and their players. Ghost images on sensors never materialize, but they know they are being hunted. Play up the uncertainty of what their scanners tell them. Then, right before a real attack, spook them with false readings of some sort. Perhaps their scanners indicate small fauna approaching from the north, but the attack comes from the south.

The PC's ship is damaged though not badly. However, the field won't allow it to take off. The field has encompassed Tartarus. No ship is taking off this Mishpacha port. The PCs quickly realize that the ships are effectively being jammed electronically just as the communications has been.

At this point, the GM needs to decide if the PCs need to know that the field expanded. They have Team Sierra and the data they collected. Correlating it, with the help of Team Sierra, could suggest a sort of disruptor field. The source of this effect is the tomb.

The team's scanning devices all start acting unreliably. This is the work of the Prophet Mechonid. He has begun to spoof the PC's sensors much as the Mechonids spoofed communications with Archimedes.

To escape the planet, they need to shut down this field.

The Survivor

One of the NPCs survived the attack, one of the girls from Adam's Eves. This is the same girl the team spoke to if they tried to raise the outpost after the deputy's panicked message.

Dolly is her name. She's a blonde Kaltoran with obvious "enhancements." She actually likes her job as she gets to meet "really fascinating people from all over the system." She's shaken by what she witnessed, and Dolly is a hard person to shake.

Dolly saw most of what happened and can describe the scene. The Mechonids came in and literally disintegrated people whole. The firefight damaged a lot of the town, and it was actually the citizens that accidentally blew places up and set things on fire. Panic reigned.

The only thing other than people that the Mechonids were interested in damaging or destroying was the communications array and the ships. The PCs can draw what conclusions they want from this.

Dolly knows nothing about the field other than that communications were disrupted prior to the attack.

Looting

As mercenaries, the idea of looting isn't likely repellant to the PCs. The town has medical supplies, weapons, and any other equipment the team might need to resupply.

Importantly, though, an old crystal radio exists in a DJ booth in town. The DJ "Howling Mad Dog Mac" used to spin tunes from his home and broadcast all through town. With ingenuity and skill, the PCs can rig a device to locate the source of the field. That is, of course, the tomb of the Archon Zalos.

At this point, the scientists can simply tell the team where the tomb is, but one of the PCs should make the corollary that the field is being generated from somewhere in the tomb. Remember, their scanners are not working. Using the crystal radio in the DJ booth is a surefire way of pinpointing where the field is coming from if they have not concluded this previously.

Ending Episode Two

This episode has a downbeat ending. The PCs are trapped on a remote peninsula on Mishpacha. The jungle is full of killer flora and Feral Nephilim. Add to that these Mechonids, and their chances of survival are slim.

The PCs have located the source of the field, if they had not already done so. Their course is simple: go to the tomb and shut the field down.

Getting there is far more complicated. They approach the tomb (and the camp) the field starts to attack their hovercrafts electronic systems. Forcing an emergency landing some distance from the tomb.

Episode Three: The Hunted

Once they have landed their hovercraft the team must make the journey to the tomb. This can take them back through the camp if they wish. It may be advisable to circle around the camp. If their guide is still alive, they have a much easier time navigating. If not, they easily become lost. The Mechonids are actively stalking them.

Off course, the native predators have not disappeared, though some are being much more cautious since the Mechonids have been on the march. Some of the Feral Tribes are hunkered down as the Mechonids have the default setting of: "destroy all sentient biological life." It is only as the Prophet wakes fully that the Mechonids begin to work as a cohesive group.

On the Way to the Tomb

Getting there is half the fun and half the danger. At some point, they are attacked by the Mechonids. This episode plays out a bit like Aliens or Predator. The team is hunted through the thick jungles of Mishpacha on the way towards the tomb. The Mechonids attack and retreat content to kill one person at a time. For this purpose, some of the more expendable NPCs might be utilized. The Legion grunts can die, possibly Jenna, anyone the GM doesn't want to use for the plot.

Build tension. The PCs know they can't get off the planet. The only way forward is through these attacks and to the tomb. People in their party are killed or disappear with a scream. The team doesn't even know what hunts them at first. This should scare the team and get the players' hearts racing a bit.

Episode Three Encounters

The following are both combat, exploratory, and roleplaying encounters.

roleplaying encounters.

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The Schizoid Mechonid

Mechonids are not like a living creature. They do not inhabit single bodies with single consciousness. Instead, they are distributed intelligence. Part of a Mechonid unit typically inhabits several bodies. They constantly learn from each part of their "body."

One might say the Mechonids form a kind of super-organism when connected. There is no proof for this as yet, and so scientists speculate endlessly. For purposes of this adventure, the Mechonids are an extended organism. Their consciousness exists in each of their various "bodies." When a body is destroyed, the consciousness has been backed up until the point of "death."

However, without the central processor (the Prophet in this adventure) communication and data sharing between the other Mechonids is only partial and not directed toward a unified purpose. The GM may use this to give the PCs a break in what is a harrowing, dangerous adventure.

NPCs and Tension in Episode Three

Aside from Cain and the Legion guards, the PCs are the only ones who have seen this kind of combat. Being hunted and killed in the wilds of Mishpacha is a strain on the mind. The NPCs may eventually break.

Jenna is probably the first to lose it. She curls into a fetal ball and refuses to move. The team has to talk her back on her feet or leave her behind. Daniel votes to leave her. Cain advocates that no one should be left behind. He does not believe this, but it helps his cover.

After Jenna cracks, Jezebel soon follows. Neither the PC who used to love her nor Daniel wants to leave her behind. She might start talking to herself. Ketch holds up well, since he is a budding sociopath. However, he might try to "bargain" with the Mechonids to lead the team into a trap. He does know something of how they work from his "experiments" on them.

The goal is to slowly erode at the cohesion of the group. The PCs are responsible for these people according to their contract with the Archimedes Project, but they are really working for Milo. Milo wants the cube. It is entirely possible the PCs decide to leave anyone behind that threatens that mission.

Mechonids Wave One

[NPC] Screams as his/her body begins to disintegrate into black powder as a purple flame curls over their skin. He/she looks helpless at you in that micro-second before he/she vanishes completely. All that is left is the echo of their scream....

After the Acolytes attacked, one or more transmitted their final data to the Mechonids in the tomb. At this point, the Prophet is just barely waking. He orders the Mechonids to carefully attack the team, wanting to take a Legion alive.

The Mechonids need Legion DNA to operate the cube. They'll try to get that by either kidnapping or killing (and taking the body of) Praxus or Aurelius.

The first attack is more of a probing action than an assault. The Mechonids know what the team can do to Acolytes: they now need to determine how well they can withstand Mechonid soldiers.

Suggested Encounter (for 4 PCs):

x2 Mechonid Hunters x2 Mechonid Zeal Acolyte Groups

Theatre of the Mind Combat: Evenly Matched (12+).

The PCs recognize the Seekers from the attack in camp during Episode Two.

The Soldier with the rifle picks off targets as a sniper would, causing the team to, hopefully, scatter. The Seekers and Mechonid Soldiers with Assault Rifles then attempt to kill one person in cover. The person they go for is the one furthest away from the rest of the group.

They do not stop until they are all killed or the PCs flee. If the PCs flee, and one of the Legion is dead, the Mechonids stop to grab the body. This gives the team a chance to run and lick their wounds.

Jezebel and Daniel Slip in Episode Three

If Jezebel cracks, Daniel becomes even more protective. Assuming the PC who loved her acts the same, Daniel sees this as the PC's attempt to win her back. At some point in either this episode or the next, the strain of the adventure and Daniel's growing paranoia conspire to push him toward violence. He attempts to kill the PC, possibly while he sleeps.

That might be the end of the PC... or Daniel.

Mechonids Wave Two

[One of the surviving NPCs is in the middle of a sentence when]:

He/She screams as the flesh of their leg rots on fast forward. The beam must have been slightly off. A picosecond later, the foliage around you also evaporates, disintegrating as purple beams impact.

One of the Legion screams, "Get down!" before the jungle becomes a field of death, the gleam of the Mechonid's armored carapaces blurring as they charge the center of your group, Another scream, but you cannot tell whose. They come on from all sides, a deluge of steel. This may very well be your last stand.

The second wave consists of: x2 Mechonid Warriors x2 Mechonid Warriors

Theatre of the Mind Combat: Evenly Matched (12+).

This time, the Seekers come in for an attack run. Again, the goal is to scatter the group. If the PCs do not split up, the NPCs do. The PCs could take charge and potentially keep the group from making the same mistake twice. Again, the Mechonids go directly after Praxus, as they need his DNA.

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Cain in Episode Three

Cain continues to pose as the charismatic, caring man. He continues to worry about his wife above the Mishpacha sky on the station. He still needs the PCs to get through the tomb. He realizes the danger there and wants "bodies" between himself and danger.

His implants only allow very simple messages to transmit. The Mechonid and he cannot really communicate in a way that allows for planning. They do not speak his language nor he theirs. In any event, they regard him as they do all biological life – needing to be purged.

Cain is beginning to plan how and when he is going to dump the team. This likely means doing so when they reach the tomb and a combat occurs. He can then run for the room containing the cube. Cain becomes the central antagonist once he turns on the team. If he's been played sympathetically up until the point of his betrayal, the twist should come as a surprise.

Mechonids Wave Three

Now, the Prophet is awake and knows he needs Legion commander DNA. That means the Mechonids tactics change. Their primary goal is abducting one or more members of the group. The Mechonids decide how many people they attempt to kidnap based on how the battle goes.

If Praxus died prior to this point, then any Legion PC may be assumed to have commander DNA.

Divide and conquer is the rule here. The Mechonids want to isolate one or more people and kill them. They do not need warriors, so the Mechonids attack the weakest of the flock. If a PC happens to be badly wounded, they might qualify. Team Sierra, apart from Cain and the Legion guards, are not cut out for combat.

The Mechonids use the terrain to their advantage. They are built for war. They likewise choose the time of their attack.

This particular "wave" repeats again and again. The Mechonids do not quit until they have killed everyone.

Once Praxus is captured, the rest of the group is now expendable. It is clear to the Prophet that they seek the Archon Facility. The Prophet seeks their destruction. He may even lure the PCs to the tomb where he can better dispose of them. Once Cain gains control of the cube, he can also control the Prophet.

If a PC is Captured

Praxus is not the only ones in danger of being abducted. The PCs could be captured (if they are Legion) as well. If they are, the player probably loses control of his or her character until the end of the game. Have the player run one of the NPCs in the meantime.

Alternatively, the GM could take the player into another room and describe what their character sees. That player could try to escape the tomb.



Horror

The Mechonids are scary. These are relentless killing machines. They outnumber the players, outgun them, and stalk them. The PCs are the hunted now. The GM needs to convey this. During the first Mechonid attack, have one of the NPCs be disintegrated. Have the Mechonid fire come from all around. Panic the team.

These are frightening killer robots. They are hard to kill and, even if you kill one, another takes its place. Don't draw a map here. Don't use miniatures. Simply tell the team what they experience. The fog of war prevents the overhead view miniatures provide. Refuse to give details unless a PC risks being shot by pausing from shooting and looking around. Be firm on this. Players are used to having a tactical view. Refuse to give them one.

Remember, the Mechonids need Legion DNA, but not just any Legion DNA will do. The Archons locked the cube such that only a Legion commander could open it. Praxus is such a commander. Amid the panic they create, the Mechonids go after Praxus.

Mechonid Stats & Tomb

Tomb



Mechonid Acolytes

Enemy Type: Henchmen

Zeal	Hit	End Dmg	Crit	Rng	Clips	Ammo	Load	RoF Type & Variation	Cost	Movement	Defence	Armour	Bodies
Pincers		5+Bodies	2	-	-	-	1	1+Bodies Melee, Claw	0	4	16	2	8
	Lock On ·	+2, Blunt.											
Targeting Laser	-1	-	-	7	-	Inf	1	1+Bodies Combat Computer	0				
	Lock On ·	+2, Small, Str	ong Hit (S	5–6), Stron	ng Hit: Targ	et Lock (Hit)	Target is	s Locked On.					
	Slots: 3,	Defence vs S	tealth: 12,	Defence	vs Impair: 1	9							
Traits:	Droid Boo	dy, Swarm											
Sacrament	Hit	End Dmg	Crit	Rng	Clips	Ammo	Load	RoF Type & Variation	Cost	Movement	Defence	Armour	Bodies
Rusted Ion SMG	-1	4+Bodies	3	2	5	RoF x3	1	3+Bodies Gun, Ion	1	4	16	2	Ч
	Lock On ·	+2, Energy, Mo	odification	n: Low Qua	ılity.								
	Slots: 3,	Defence vs S	tealth: 12,	Defence	vs Impair: 1	9							
Traits:	Droid Boo	dy, Sure Foote	d (No Del	fence or M	lovement p	enalties fror	n Difficul	t Terrain (including O Gravity)	by hover	ing).			
Absolution	Hit	End Dmg	Crit	Rng	Clips	Ammo	Load	RoF Type & Variation	Cost	Movement	Defence	Armour	Bodies
Absolution Self-Propelled Shotgu		End Dmg 6+Bodies	Crit 3	Rng 3*	Clips 5	Ammo RoF x2	Load 1	RoF Type & Variation 2+Bodies Gun, Self-Propelled	Cost 2	Movement 4	Defence 14	Armour 3	Bodies 5
-	n +2	6+Bodies	3	3*	5	RoF x2	1	31					
-	n +2 Lock On ·	6+Bodies	3 Works in	3* Liquid, *S	5 Strong Hit (S	RoF x2 5-6) vs Targ	1	2+Bodies Gun, Self-Propelled					
-	n +2 Lock On Slots: 3,	6+Bodies +2. Low Tech, Defence vs Sl	3 Works in tealth: 10,	3* Liquid, *S Defence	5 Strong Hit (S vs Impair: 1	RoF x2 5-6) vs Targ 7) ets withir	2+Bodies Gun, Self-Propelled	2	Ч	14		
Self-Propelled Shotgu	n +2 Lock On Slots: 3,	6+Bodies +2. Low Tech, Defence vs Sl	3 Works in tealth: 10,	3* Liquid, *S Defence	5 Strong Hit (S vs Impair: 1	RoF x2 5-6) vs Targ 7) ets withir	2+Bodies Gun, Self-Propelled n first Range Increment.	2	Ч	14		
Self-Propelled Shotgu	n +2 Lock On Slots: 3,	6+Bodies +2. Low Tech, Defence vs Sl	3 Works in tealth: 10,	3* Liquid, *S Defence	5 Strong Hit (S vs Impair: 1	RoF x2 5-6) vs Targ 7) ets withir	2+Bodies Gun, Self-Propelled n first Range Increment.	2	Ч	14		
Self-Propelled Shotgui Traits:	n +2 Lock On + Slots: 3, Droid Boo	6+Bodies +2, Low Tech, Defence vs SI dy, Amass (St	3 Works in tealth: 10, rong Hit:	3* Liquid, *S Defence Amass (Al	5 Strong Hit (5 vs Impair: 1 ttack, Hit) (RoF x2 5-6) vs Targ 7 Gain +1 Body	l ets withir (may ne	2+Bodies Gun, Self-Propelled a first Range Increment. ver have more than 6 above y	2 our start	Ч ing Bodies)).	14	3	5
Self-Propelled Shotgui Traits: Vestment	n +2 Lock On Slots: 3, Droid Boo Hit	6+Bodies +2, Low Tech, Defence vs Si dy, Amass (St End Dmg	3 Works in tealth: 10, rong Hit: Crit 4	3* Liquid, *S Defence Amass (Al Rng -	5 Strong Hit (5 vs Impair: 1 ttack, Hit) (RoF x2 5-6) vs Targ 7 Gain +1 Body	l ets withir (may ne Load	2+Bodies Gun, Self-Propelled n first Range Increment. ver have more than 6 above y RoF Type & Variation	2 our start Cost	4 ng Bodies)). Movement	14 Defence	3 Armour	5 Bodies
Self-Propelled Shotgui Traits: Vestment	n +2 Lock On Slots: 3, Droid Boo Hit	6+Bodies +2, Low Tech, Defence vs SI dy, Amass (St End Dmg 5+Bodies	3 Works in tealth: 10, rong Hit: Crit 4	3* Liquid, *S Defence Amass (Al Rng -	5 Strong Hit (5 vs Impair: 1 ttack, Hit) (RoF x2 5-6) vs Targ 7 Gain +1 Body	l ets withir (may ne Load	2+Bodies Gun, Self-Propelled n first Range Increment. ver have more than 6 above y RoF Type & Variation	2 our start Cost	4 ng Bodies)). Movement	14 Defence	3 Armour	5 Bodies
Self-Propelled Shotgur Traits: Vestment Arc Fire Torch	n +2 Lock On - Slots: 3, Droid Boo Hit Lock On - -1	6+Bodies +2, Low Tech, Defence vs SI dy, Amass (St End Dmg 5+Bodies	3 Works in tealth: 10, rong Hit: Crit 4 en 2 min -	3* Liquid, *S Defence Amass (Al Amass (Al Amass A a 3. 7	5 itrong Hit (S vs Impair: 1 ttack, Hit) (Clips - -	RoF x2 5-6) vs Targ 7 Gain +1 Body Ammo - Inf	l ets within (may ne Load 1	2+Bodies Gun, Self-Propelled n first Range Increment. ver have more than 6 above y RoF Type & Variation 1+Bodies Melee, Arc Fire 1+Bodies Combat Computer	2 our start Cost 2	4 ng Bodies)). Movement	14 Defence	3 Armour	5 Bodies
Self-Propelled Shotgur Traits: Vestment Arc Fire Torch	n +2 Lock On - Slots: 3, Droid Boo Hit Lock On - Lock On -	6+Bodies +2, Low Tech, Defence vs Sl dy, Amass (St End Dmg 5+Bodies +2, Energy, Pe	3 Works in tealth: 10, rong Hit: Crit 4 en 2 min - ong Hit (S	3* Liquid, *S Defence Amass (Al Rng - 3. 7 5-6), Stron	5 vs Impair: 1 ttack, Hit) (Clips - - - ng Hit: Targ	RoF x2 5-6) vs Targ 7 36ain +1 Body Ammo - Inf et Lock (Hit)	l ets within (may ne Load 1	2+Bodies Gun, Self-Propelled n first Range Increment. ver have more than 6 above y RoF Type & Variation 1+Bodies Melee, Arc Fire 1+Bodies Combat Computer	2 our start Cost 2	4 ng Bodies)). Movement	14 Defence	3 Armour	5 Bodies

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"Hunter" Mechonid Disciple

Enemy Type: Skilled

	Defence:	10 + Ref + (-2) = 9	Armour: (3 + = (3)	End: 10+(Str x5)+(10)=(35)
Ref 2 Int 3 5 Mov 3 9er 4 6 Fate 0 6	vs Impair vs Psionic vs Stealth **#Allies (max: 10)	Def+Str+ = 1Def+Foc+ = 110+Per+ = 4	vs Energy + vs Slow + at 0 Endurance -	RecoveryFoc + \bigcirc = \bigcirc 3Stealth Req: Cover2 + Ref + \bigcirc = $(+4)$ Combat OrderInt + \bigcirc = \bigcirc 3

Weapon (Pick One)	Hit	End Dmg	Crit	Rng	Clips	Ammo	Load	RoF	Wgt	Type & Variation	Cost
Bio-Disintegration Rifle	+]	5*	Ч*	3	2	4	2]**	3	Gun, Bio-Disintegrator	2
	Natural, E	Bio Tech, Ener	gy, Burn,	**Strong	Hit (5-6) w	/ith all RoF	1 Attack I	Rolls, *–2 Da	image	vs Robots, Modifications: Low Quality	, Personalised.
	Strong Hi	t: Bio-Disinteg	gration ([)amage, Hit	, 1 use per	RoF) Deal	+2 Damag	ge to all non	Robot	Targets with this Attack.	
Bio-Disintegration SMG		5*	3*	1	3	9	1	3 (+2d6)	2	Gun, Bio-Disintegrator	2
	Lock On ·	+2, Natural, B	io Tech, I	Energy, Bur	n, *-2 Dar	mage vs Ro	bots, Mod	ifications: Pe	rsonalis	sed, Low Quality, Targeting Matrix.	
	Strong Hi	t: Bio-Disinteg	gration ([)amage, Hit	, 1 use per	RoF) Deal	+2 Damag	ge to all non	Robot	Targets with this Attack.	

(Race / Var / Trait	Requirements	Benefits
	Mechonid		At the start of your Turn, deal 2 radiation Endurance Damage to all non Robot characters within 30 Spaces of you.
	Talent	Skilled NPC	
	Well Fitted	NPC	(Outfit Variation: Scram Suit (Shield, Remove any Locked On Effect on you at the start of your Turn)).

"Warrior" Mechonid Disciple

Enemy Type: Skilled



Weapon (Pick One)	Hit	End Dmg	Crit	Rng	Clips	Ammo	Load	RoF	Wgt	Type & Variation			Cost
Bio-Disintegrator Assault Rifle	+4	5*	4*	Ч	3	8	2**	2 (+1d6)	3	Gun, Bio-Disinteg	rator		Ч
	Lock On	+2, Bio Tech,	Energy, E	Burn, Natura	l, *-2 Dar	nage vs Ro	bots, **-i	2 Draw, Modil	fications	s: Personalised, Targ	jeting Matri	Χ.	
	Strong Hi	t: Bio-Disinte	gration (C	lamage, Hit,	l use per	RoF) Deal	+2 Damag	ge to all non	Robot ⁻	Targets with this At	ack.		
Bio-Disintegrator Rifle	+3	Ч*	4*	6	2	Ч	2**]***	3	Gun, Bio-Disinteg	rator		Ч
	Lock On	+2, Bio Tech,	Energy, E	Burn, Natura	l, *-2 Dar	nage vs Ro	bots, **-i	2 Draw, ***S	trong H	it (5-6) with all Rof	1 Attack R	Iolls,	
	Modificat	ions: Persona	lised, Adv	vanced Ami	mo, Target	ing Matrix.							
	Strong Hi	t: Bio-Disinte	gration (C	lamage, Hit,	l use per	RoF) Deal	+2 Damag	ge to all non	Robot ⁻	Targets with this At	ack.		
Utility Item					Armou	- De	fence	Endurance	+ C	over Front Cover	Slots	Weight	Cost
Multispectral Visor												0	Free

Reduce all of your Target's Limited Vision and Low Light Cover by 1 Step, Defence vs Stealth +2

Race / Var / Trait	Requirements	Benefits
Mechonid		At the start of your Turn, deal 2 radiation Endurance Damage to all non Robot characters within 30 Spaces of you.
Well Prepared	Skilled NPC	
Eagle Eye	Min Per 2	

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Episode Four: The Tomb

Through the dread jungle of the Mishpacha peninsula, the PCs have suffered attacks by fauna, feral tribes of Nephilim, and Mechonid killing squads. Battered, but hopefully intact, the team arrives at the location of the tomb, but all is not what it seems.

The Waterfall

There are moments when the savagery of Mishpacha gives way to raw beauty. This is one of those. One hundred meters above, a waterfall cascades into a lagoon. Water like glittering diamonds, the round green hills on the cliff above. A paradise, but what lies behind it?

The waterfall conceals the entrance to the tomb. During the war, this was a secret Archon research facility. This is no tomb, or at least it was never designed as such. The facility was built to study advanced technology – particularly that believed to be of human origin.

When the war was winding down and the system broke, Zalos brought the quantum cube here to hide it for all time. The Mechonids, who have some special connection to the cube, pursued him. Here, Zalos made his last stand. He was able to trap the Mechonids using what little he knew of the cube. No one would ever get in or out... until today.

Only Cain Colson knows the truth, and he knows only part of that. He knows Zalos died here. He knows this is no tomb. He knows he must steal the cube.

At the base of the cliff, the PCs find the previously mentioned hovercraft. The missing team members are no where to be seen.

Motives

This episode sees the motives of various NPCs build to a crescendo. Cain Colson wants the cube. He has implants given him by the Seekers that allow him to interface with the cube. The cube then allows him to control the Mechonids.

Cain may have slipped away earlier in the adventure, in which case he is now mustering the Mechonids to eliminate the players while he prepares the cube to open a portal allowing his escape.

Cain wants to get the cube off planet. By so doing, he can wake the rest of the Mechonid race. He plans to use the cube to broadcast a signal commanding the rest of the Mechonid race to wake.

Daniel has either already attempted to kill his rival or tries now. He waits for the best opening to do so. This can cause quite a problem if the team is already in combat.

If the NPCs mentioned are not here, or have been killed, then the love triangle and other rivalries do not play out. The adventure is designed for linearity. However, the GM should allow for subplots to play out as they will at the table.

Inside the Tomb

The PCs method of entry lies behind the curtain of the waterfall. Through this cool water, they enter a cave. The cave has steps leading downward. They note the steps are made for beings considerably taller than themselves.

The passageways and rooms of the Archon facility are carved from the basalt rock itself with laser precision. Strange glyphs – Archon script – line some hallways and doors. None of it is decipherable to the PCs. If they take time to decipher the script, they realize they need a vast library and experts to do so.

The cube itself is inside the facility. It currently generates the field trapping everyone on Mishpacha. If the team built a radio device using parts in Tartarus to track the field, that device aids them here.

Naturally, the Mechonids are not keen on the PC's presence here. Those that remain hunt and kill any of the team they can. The GM must determine how and when they attack. The Prophet Mechonid is now fully awake, thus the Mechonids tactics are much better than they were previously. Make the encounters with the Mechonids harder as a result.

Entrance

Past the mist of the waterfall are giant steps leading toward a platform. By the middle of the stairs, you realize what happened to the two missing team members. Their bodies, or rather half of them, lay at the foot of a great door. Getting closer, you see that their bottom portions are simply gone, as if vanished into the ether. The giant door lays open, faint blue light visible beyond.

There is no encounter as such here. The bodies seem to have partially disintegrated. Where the bottom portions are missing, the insides are visible. It is as if an invisible field prevents them from spilling out – an effect of the disintegration beams.

1. Operations Room

This huge door is made of the same basalt as the rest of the tomb. It looks thick. As you approach, a red laser scans your faces. When it lands on a Legion, a voice from everywhere and nowhere at once intones words you do not understand. The stone door slides into the wall without so much as a whisper.

Inside is an operations room. Anyone can recognize that this is

The Quantum Cube

The cube is a human artifact some ten thousand years old. Its true function is unknown. The Archons had begun to unlock a few of its secrets but not enough to save them from their fate.

Half a meter on each side, the cube hovers of its own accord. No magnetic field appears to lift the cube. There are no thrusters. By the laws of known physics, it should not hover above the ground.

The cube itself has properties that bend and warp space-time, but no one has figured out what these properties do. The Archons may or may not have understood this aspect of the cube. Prior to their demise, they put a lock on the cube. This lock was coded to Legion DNA. Since the Archons would be gone, they trusted their elite soldiers to handle the cube. A plan existed for the Legion to take and guard the cube, but Zalos' untimely demise intervened.

Any scientifically minded PC can deduce that the Archons would not have entrusted their cube to mere foot soldiers. It is therefore logical to assume the DNA needed is that of a higher-ranking Legion. Praxus and Aurelius both qualify. Of course, Cain might have convinced one or both to freely give their DNA back at camp. In that case, Cain has what he needs already and has passed it on to the Mechonids via one of the Acolytes. This gives the GM a way for the cube to activate without having to capture Praxus or Aurelius. Consider this a fail-safe in case the PCs manage to prevent the capture of either Legion. In this case, the Prophet was not awake when the DNA was delivered by an Acolyte and thought he needed to get Praxus himself.

Once the Mechonids gather the DNA and use it on the cube, the cube begins to spin and the field drops. The Prophet must be awake for this to happen. If he is not, Cain must activate it by himself before he steals it.

some sort of general monitoring station. That is definitely not the sort of thing one would find in a tomb. There are controls on consoles made of an unknown metal-carbon alloy. When touched, they come to life, showing different parts of the facility on holo-monitors that appear out of thin air like a conjurer's trick.

Only rooms 3, 13, and 18 are visible. None show the quantum cube.

2. Room of Unfinished Doors

This long room stretches into darkness. Against one of the long walls are unfinished passageways. Perhaps there was more to the tomb the Archons were unable to complete?

Running the "Tomb"

This is a very difficult episode focused on exploration and combat. The Mechonids are deadly foe, and they know the facility well. The PCs are up against great odds.

The best thing they can do is get to the cube as fast as possible. Wandering around should be met with Mechonid attacks. Remember, the Mechonids may still need Legion DNA. While they likely already have it, this is another chance for them to capture Praxus or Aurelius.

If Jenna is still alive, she insists on exploring. The PCs must stop her in any manner possible. True, this facility is a treasure trove of knowledge, but getting out alive is the real priority. The PCs need to kill the disruptor field to get off planet.

If things slow down, have ominous noises approach or let loose a Mechonid or two. The team needs to feel time is of the essence from now until the end of the adventure. Really, once the Cain takes the cube, the rest of the adventure is a continuous battle to get it back.

That is easier said than done.

Suddenly, pulsing light comes from the far end of the hall. It takes a moment before you realize it is weapons fire!

One of the Acolytes was left behind in this room to alert the other Mechonids. As the team enters, the Mechonids arrive to stop them. This is a patrol of 2 Mechonids if Cain Colson has not yet gained control of the cube and the Mechonids. If he has, there are four.

x2 or x3 Mechonid Disciples Theatre of the Mind Combat: Evenly Matched (12+).

3. Safety Chamber

Again, a red laser plays over you and opens when it scans the face of your Legion ally. The doors slide into the wall. In the chamber beyond, the stone room is covered completely with white panels. Each emits a faint blue glow. Another set of identical doors lies at the center of the room.

This chamber is a kind of fail-safe designed to seal in the event that anything went wrong with the technology brought to Room 4. Based on the level of danger involved, the room would flood with lethal gamma rays, killing anyone exposed to whatever dangers they may have inadvertently released.

At the GM's discretion, this room might be under control of the Mechonids. If so, they seal the doors behind the PCs and activate the panels. The team must find a way to get out.

Behind the panels is unfamiliar circuitry as well as a manual release lever. "Hotwiring" the circuitry to open the door is possible. Finding the release lever is a matter of luck unless the PCs actively search for one. It makes sense one would exist. After all, what if the system accidentally trapped someone? If the team looks for the lever, they find it in 1–5 minutes.

4. Clean Room and Laboratory

In the center of this vast, white chamber sits the quantum cube. It hovers a meter above the ground, a circle of gold surrounding it. Purple light shoots from the center of the cube, bathing the room in ghostly photons.

The cube begins to spin. The room crackles. Your comms suddenly burst with static.

However, so immediately was your attention drawn to the cube, that you did not note the Mechonids lurking in the shadows. Just off center from the cube is a huge, silicone skeleton in a suit of onyx-looking armor. Was this an Archon? No time to determine that now. The Mechonids attack!

The Prophet is not present in this battle, but he is directing it. The Mechonids engage the PCs. As they do, Cain Colson interfaces with the cube and flees. The PCs may attempt to prevent him from doing so once they see the cube follows him. The Mechonids intervene. The cube also shields Cain from fire at this time.

Cain: "Defend me! Vanquish the flesh beings!"

The Mechonids obey, compelled by the power of the cube.

Protecting the Cain's escape is the Mechonids primary motivation here. They will do anything to ensure he gets out of the facility.

There are other tables upon which sit pieces of lost technology in various states of analysis. They have been that way for over one hundred years. The tables are made of the same metal-carbon alloy seen elsewhere. They provide excellent cover if tipped over.

There is no denying this is going to be a hard fight for the PCs, but once they defeat the Mechonids they can chase after the cube.

x3 Mechonid Disciples

Theatre of the Mind Combat: Evenly Matched (12+).

5. Mechonid Analysis Chamber

Heads, arms, legs, torsos – this room is like a robot abattoir. These Mechonids lie in pieces, their wiry guts pulled out like loops of intestines. Each sits on something like a gurney that floats above the floor. Two doors lie along the walls.

Talking With the Outside World Again

Once the field drops, the team's communicators work but not inside the facility. The facility is underground, and the walls have properties that block most communications. This does not apply to Mechonid or Archon technology.

No doubt the PCs want to get in contact with Archimedes Station as soon as possible. If they decide to do this inside the facility, they must go to the Communications Room at 15.

This is the area where the Archons studied the Mechonids after they went rogue. They tried desperately to find out what caused their machines to turn against both their creators and all biological life.

> The bodies actually look like they have recently undergone some repair. Though they are still now, their fellow Mechonids were working to rebuild them.

6, 7, 8, 9. Cells

Each of these cells once held a Mechonid. Two skeletons, one Kaltoran and one Legion, lie in numbers 7 and 8. The Mechonids were released when the rest of their kind woke in this facility.

10. Sanctuary

On a plinth in the center of the room stands the statue of a Corporate woman. Her pose suggests a bright light in her eyes, for her arm is raised against something. It is of exquisite detail and craftsmanship. At the far end of the room is space... the void itself lit only by a pale blue world spinning in the endless night. The image is three-dimensional, as if the planet were right here before you and all you had to do was grab it.

Along two of the walls are controls similar to those found in Room 2. These can shut off the high-resolution hologram. In point of fact, the planet shown is Earth though the PCs have no way of knowing this. Likewise, the woman on the plinth is not a Vagarti but a human being. She is no statue. Long, long, ago she was frozen, turned at the molecular level to a bronze-like alloy. She could be "resurrected." The Archons were trying, but the war ended such efforts. She is very heavy to carry.

She is here to spark the GM's imagination for a future adventure. How old is she? What brought her to this state? Perhaps, in a future tale the PCs might find out.

The hologram conceals the door to the Escape Room (1) on the map). The PCs only have to walk through the hologram at the center to gain access to that room.

The Prophet

The Prophet Mechonid is a leader among its kind. Designed for tactical battlefield applications, Prophets serve as the living equivalent of officers. This particular Prophet was designed to lead a special unit of Mechonids seeking to capture the quantum cube. They can sense where the cube is if the signal is not blocked.

While in transit from the weapons/research platform where the cube was first held, Zalos was unable to conceal the cube's beacon. This special unit, led by the Prophet, tracked him to Mishpacha and this facility. The rest unfolded as previously described.

It has taken the Prophet time to study Team Sierra and extrapolate how long the war has been over. He woke slowly, read their logs, and decided to unlock the cube. Then Cain intervened. The Prophet wasn't expecting that.



11. Escape Room

Such was the dangerous nature of the work done here, that the Archons provided a secret escape route.

Winded, you rush into the room in pursuit of the cube. Before you lay several tunnels. The sound of a waterfall echoes down each.

The tunnels are short. Each leads to an upper part of the waterfall. When the PCs go through any tunnel they encounter a purple force field in each. Passing through does nothing but decontaminate them. They don't know this though. There is no way around these fields.

Once he has the cube, Cain may try to leave via this room.

12. Recharging Pods

Ten recesses in the stone, each nearly one and half times the size of man. Wires and tubes hang from each of these white polymersheathed forms. They look something like a shower you'd see in a hotel, but you know they are more than that. You could not, however, say what their true purpose might be.

Many Archons did not eat or sleep in any way people would recognize today. Instead, they recharged for a period of time. This was both meditation and energy transfer. If a PC steps into one of the small booths, a geometric solid appears in the center of the room. It is three-dimensional and is solid to the touch. In fact, this is just the room playing with the PC's brains. The object is an illusion. It shifts between different shapes, cycling more rapidly as the transfigurations go on. There is a pattern to them. Anyone that watches the entire cycle slips into a meditative trance.

13. Monitoring Room

You have no time to posit what this room might once have been, for now it is full of Mechonid Disciples. Beyond the only other door save the one you entered from is a huge Mechonid. His chrome refracts the red light of the chamber. His arms lift menacingly. The enemy falls upon you.

Hopefully, the PCs saw this room on the monitors in Room 2. If they did, one hopes they were wise enough to avoid it. These Mechonids have finished waking the Prophet and are about to leave the facility.

x2 Mechonid Disciples xl Mechonid Acolyte Group Theatre of the Mind Combat: Evenly Matched (12+).

If the cube has already been unlocked, the Prophet smashes through the PCs toward the exit as Cain calls him. The Disciples remain behind to finish the team off. If, for some reason the cube remains inert, the Prophet (of Cain) likely still needs one of the PCs or Praxus to unlock it.

14. Orrery

The Prophet fell in the Orrery to Zalos' assault. However, Zalos was mortally wounded and limped back to Room 4 where he activated the cube.

An infinite room... no, not a room, space itself. The stars wink in unfamiliar patterns. Planets, now only the size of yourselves, spin in the light of burning stars. Upon entering, you find yourselves in the void, in a strange system that is most definitely not Haven. What strange orrey is this where the planets orbit about a dual-sun?

An orrery is a model of the solar system. Usually made of metal, this particular orrery is a holographic projection but one of such high resolution that it looks real. Such technology is not unheard of, but there is more. If a PC reaches into or otherwise tries to touch one of the planets, they find themselves on that planet. This is a complicated virtual simulation/hallucination, but the PC believes they truly are on an alien world.

The smell of something like pine. The breeze across your face. They sky is purple, and twin moons loom ghostly on the horizon. A blue-colored grass grows to your waist and tickles your palm as you touch it. What place is this? It takes you a moment to realize who you are, and that this is not your home.

Something squawks from a clump of strange trees. You turn only to find your companions staring at you in the orerry. The other world somehow seemed more real than this room and those in it....

Future Plot Seeds

The orrery is an excellent way for the GM to introduce a future adventure. While the PCs are not quite sure how to use it properly, they could download a map of what system it displays. Coupled with the stars behind, the team may be able to locate the system with the twin suns later.

What system does this map lead to? Possibly the last bastion of the Archons or a planet overrun with Mechonids? Perhaps humanity fled to this system in physical form or as digital signals. The sky is the limit.

If the PCs have time to mess about with the room, they might accidentally trigger shifts in the projection by speaking. The technology interprets a few words or sounds as Archon speech. It then alters the system shown or perhaps zooms in on a planet. See sidebar for more details.

15. Laboratory 1

This is the first of three laboratories and research areas.

The red light again, then the door sliding silently into the wall. Beyond lies a white room. Transparent spheres hover in the air of their own accord. Each contains some sort of experiment. In one, you see mold growing in crystalline patterns. In another, tiny machines create castles and towers out of sand. As soon as the little robots complete a skyline, they destroy it. The purpose of any of this escapes you.

The spheres hover, so they are easy to move though cumbersome. The PCs may elect to take one or more of the spheres with them. They are very durable. Value for the spheres on the market is 2 Resources worth of credits.

16. The Library

Translucent green panels, rectangular in shape, hang in serried ranks. As you pass the panels – thousands of them – turn like pages in a book. Upon brushing up against one, the panel spins and enlarges becoming a window looking into a forest – perhaps one on Mishpacha. The three-dimensional image features labeled flora and fauna in a language you cannot read.

This library is holographic in nature. Each "panel" represents a book. They hang in the air like books on shelves, but none of them is corporeal to the touch. These ghost books house an unknown, perhaps unimaginable, core of knowledge. Sadly, the PCs have no way of knowing how the library is organized, and finding information on a particular subject is not feasible.

However, this library is an excellent delivery method for any plot seeds the GM develops on his or her own.

17. Laboratory 2

Polyhedral shapes in polychromatic colors spin and dance like a ballet of math you can only imagine understanding. Things that look like equations appear briefly in the air then burst into nothingness. Some very few symbols are vaguely recognizable to you, though you cannot now recall what they mean.

This room is actually a computer. Possibly, it is sentient but not in any way understandable to the PCs. The room is looking for a "theory of everything." It has attempted to solve the division between Relativity and Quantum Mechanics for over 100 years. The processing power alone is staggering.

The symbols are written in what is presumably Archon script. An extremely intelligent and mathematically inclined PC who rolls very, very well might glean the nature of the equation. If this advanced computer cannot unlock the theory of everything, the PCs have little chance of understanding of how it's attempting to do so.

18. Communications Center

An empty room inside an empty room. It takes you a moment to realize what you are looking at. On the far wall from where you entered is what you take to be a smaller room inside this one. You quickly realize that this "other" room is a hologram. Inside that room strangely shaped chairs show unfamiliar-looking skeletons hung with cobwebs. A shadow scuttles across the room, making your hearts jump. Another follows. They are spiders, too close to the lighting in the room and casting unnaturally long shadows. Screens buzz with static in that distant room. When did those people die, you wonder?

This is the primary communications room for the facility. The



Future Plot Seed

The room displayed on the wall could be that of an Archon ship or another Archon facility. The skeletons may not be recognizable because they are 1) Archons, and 2) mutated by a Nephilim biological agent. The spiders may be part of this mutation as well.

If the GM wants to use this as a future adventure seed, have one of the screens show something other than static. In this case, the screen displays a readout giving coordinates. Using these, the PCs can travel to the location. It lies in the Haven System or just outside. Perhaps it is a remote asteroid in the Monopoly Belt or a moon destroyed during the war?

Rust-colored stains mar the floor, suggesting Zalos came here while dying. What was so important that he had to communicate with these other Archons? Surely the answer must lead to a trove of valuable salvage at the very least? Archons were communicating with an unknown species. This was the last communication anyone had with the facility before Zalos died.

The other walls are not currently activated but they, too, function as windows into other rooms and other worlds.

19. Trophy Room

This room is only accessible by walking through the hologram on the wall, much like in Room 10.

Like a giant shadowbox, this room is full of rectangular shaped cubicles of varying sizes. Inside each is some unknown treasure. The jagged shard of a humanoid femur implanted with a metal device. A wooden club, nearly rotting, upon which names have been burned. A doll, her lace dress as fragile as a moth's wings. A gun, but one like no other you have ever seen. What are these things?

These are all human artifacts. The "wooden club" is actually a sports bat with a signature on it. The doll dates from the Victorian era. The weapon dates from just before humanity disappeared. All of the above or none of it might be true. Who can say what humanity was really like?

No doubt the PCs want to get their hands on these items but, when they reach out to grab one, a force field intervenes. It cannot be penetrated by any means they have at their disposal.

A sealed door at the far side of the room scans the team with the now-familiar red light. However, when the light finishes scanning, a deep voices asks what sounds like a question in the Archon language. The PCs do not have the answer to this query.

20. The Core

The adventure presumes the team never reaches this room. It is a nuclear fusion core.

Lighting sparks from a central, massive ball of metal spinning in the center of the room. The lightning hits various nodes around this completely spherical room. The ball is at least the mass of a truck. Even as you watch, you begin feeling ill.

This is a fusion reactor. The Archons were immune to the radiation emitted by the ball of metal. The PCs are not. As long as they retreat, they'll be fine. If they stay too long, radiation poisoning may cause them symptoms later- nausea, hair falling out, skin lesions, etc...

Jezebel and Daniel Slip in Episode Four

If Daniel did not attack his PC rival in the last episode, he does so now at the GM's discretion. Jezebel may be more or less composed depending on the course of events. Dramatically, her reaction to her husband's attack on her former lover, and the PC's response, is an important emotional keystone in the adventure. She might also have cracked. This is all up to the GM.



Cain in Episode Four

Cain reveals his traitorous ways in this episode. Once inside the tomb, he waits for the best opportunity to slip away. He can feel where the cube is located. He most likely runs away during combat. However, he wants to leave when he is close to the cube. The Mechonids would kill him as readily as anyone else. Keep this in mind when you run Cain.

Cain does not grandstand or laugh maniacally as he slips away. He feigns fear if he needs to and bolts like he has cracked. From whatever location he starts in, Cain proceeds directly to Room 4.

With his arrival, the cube can now be moved. If the PCs do not chase him, assume the activation of the cube occurs as written in the description for Room 4.

As Cain is seemingly an ally, this betrayal hopefully comes as a shock. The team probably wants to kill him when they realize what he has done. The GM may allow Cain to die here, but it is more satisfying if he dies at the climax of the adventure. The cube may shield him if the GM needs a reason why the PCs cannot kill him yet. If Cain does die, substitute his role with the Prophet. It, too, wants the cube.

Episode Five: The Prophet

This penultimate episode involves a fight with both Mechonid Acolytes and the Prophet. Once Cain secures the cube, he immediately leaves the tomb.

The PCs encounter Cain and the Prophet directly outside the tomb with the waterfall pouring around them. Before any battle commences, the team sees another battle raging silently above. Just past the edge of the atmosphere, the team sees a giant Mechonid Harbinger engaged in battle with Kaltoran and Legion warships.

From the cliffs past the waterfall you can see the blue skies of Mishpacha. Where you expect to see only a small moon, you instead see the giant hulk of an unfamiliar ship. It is engaged with Kaltoran and Legion vessels but makes them look like bugs next to a giant Neph. The hulk bristles with weapons and looks like nothing you have ever seen. No... that isn't true. It looks like the Mechonids you've seen on this adventure. It is function over form, a giant dreadnaught just past the atmosphere. Up there, a silent battle rages.

The Battle of the Falls

This battle begins because Cain now controls the Mechonids. He uses them to delay the team while he opens a portal using the cube. The Prophet is his main weapon with the smaller drones backing him up. The battle is very difficult for the PCs.

Suggested Encounter (for 4 PCs):

x1 Mechonid Prophet

x1 Mechonid Absolution Acolyte Group

Theatre of the Mind Combat: Evenly Matched (12+).

Cain can give orders to the Prophet, but he doesn't specifically "control" his movements. The Prophet obeys because he must, but he is not happy about this.

Obscured by the waterfall and the bending of light, you see some hulking steel form larger than any Mechonid you have yet encountered. As it strides through the curtain of water, you realize its full size. You feel dwarfed then terribly afraid. Huge arms wrapped in chrome gauntlets bead with the fresh water as a head, all too fearsome, turns toward you - purple eyes flaring.

With that, the battle begins. Cain used the cube to rise higher on

the cliffs, and the PCs cannot get a clear shot at him. In any event, they have bigger problems right now as the Mechonids, guided by the Prophet, swarm out of the waterfall and attack.

The battle rages along the cliffs around the waterfall. This is not only scenic; it also serves as difficult terrain. Along these wet rocks one could easily slip. The GM should have the PCs make necessary Physical Skill Rolls if they are hit. Likewise, the PCs can use the cliff as a weapon against the Mechonid Acolytes, pushing them over the edge to be wrecked in the jungle below.

The Prophet scales the cliffs with ease and uses his soldiers to distract the team while he climbs the cliffs and flanks them. Above, Cain activates the cube. The team can see a portal beginning to form.

They need to climb after Cain and follow him through the portal once it opens.

Cain manipulates the floating cube, and the air around both shimmers in the way heat bends light. There is an audible sucking noise and, out of nowhere, a small tear in the world opens. Gradually, Cain's ministrations of the cube make the hole larger. Soon, it will be big enough for him to squeeze through, fleeing who knows where.

How the battle unfolds is variable. Certainly, the PCs need to follow Cain through the portal if they are to gain the cube. However, they need to defeat the Mechonids first - or at least enough of them to climb the cliffs to get to the portal.

The best scenario for the PCs is to defeat both the Acolytes and the Prophet. However, the team may go through the portal first. In that case, the Prophet will wait for them to exit.

Cain in Episode Five

Cain has lost all pretenses of friendliness and caring. His only goal is to get the cube and escape through the portal. However, the longer he spends interfaced with the cube, the less of Cain remains. He begins to serve the will of the cube which, for its own reasons, wants the same thing Cain wants - to wake the greater host of Mechonids system wide.

Ending Episode Five

Episode five ends as soon as the players follow Cain through the portal. That event leads instantly to the next episode.

Suggested Battle Map



Monstrous	Nemesis NPC	lgnore 1st Suppressed Effect each against you Turn.	Character takes up 4 spaces (normally 1).
Muscular Implants	Min Str 3		
Set Alight		Strong Hit: Set Alight (Damage, Hit, Burn) Make a free Attack against Target character at the	
		start of each of your Turns (at O range) until they gain First Aid (Set Alight Effects do	
		not Stack multiple times).	

Mechonid Acolyte

Enemy Type: Henchmen

Hit	End Dmg	Crit	Rng	Clips	Ammo	Load	RoF	Type & Variation	Cost	Movement	Defence	Armour	Bodies
+2	6+Bodies	3	3*	5	RoF x2	1	2+Bodies	6 Gun, Self–Propelled	2	Ч	14	3	5
Lock On ·	⊧2, Low Tech,	Works in	Liquid, *St	rong Hit (5	-6) vs Targ	ets withi	n first Rang	ge Increment.					
Slots: 3,	Defence vs St	ealth: 10,	Defence v	s Impair: 17	7								
Droid Bod	ly, Amass (Str	ong Hit: .	Amass (Att	ack, Hit) G	ain +1 Body	(may ne	ver have m	nore than 6 above yo	our start	ing Bodies)).			
:	+2 Lock On + Slots: 3, I	+2 6+Bodies Lock On +2, Low Tech, Slots: 3, Defence vs St	+2 6+Bodies 3 Lock On +2, Low Tech, Works in Slots: 3, Defence vs Stealth: 10,	+2 6+Bodies 3 3* Lock On +2, Low Tech, Works in Liquid, *St Slots: 3, Defence vs Stealth: 10, Defence v	+2 6+Bodies 3 3* 5 Lock On +2, Low Tech, Works in Liquid, *Strong Hit (5 Slots: 3, Defence vs Stealth: 10, Defence vs Impair: 17	+2 6+Bodies 3 3* 5 RoF x2 Lock On +2, Low Tech, Works in Liquid, *Strong Hit (5–6) vs Targ Slots: 3, Defence vs Stealth: 10, Defence vs Impair: 17	+2 6+Bodies 3 3* 5 RoF x2 1 Lock On +2, Low Tech, Works in Liquid, *Strong Hit (5-6) vs Targets within Slots: 3, Defence vs Stealth: 10, Defence vs Impair: 17	+2 6+Bodies 3 3* 5 RoF x2 1 2+Bodies Lock On +2, Low Tech, Works in Liquid, *Strong Hit (5-6) vs Targets within first Ram Slots: 3, Defence vs Stealth: 10, Defence vs Impair: 17	+2 6+Bodies 3 3* 5 RoF x2 1 2+Bodies Gun, Self-Propelled Lock On +2, Low Tech, Works in Liquid, *Strong Hit (5–6) vs Targets within first Range Increment. Slots: 3, Defence vs Stealth: 10, Defence vs Impair: 17	+2 6+Bodies 3 3* 5 RoF x2 1 2+Bodies Gun, Self-Propelled 2 Lock On +2, Low Tech, Works in Liquid, *Strong Hit (5–6) vs Targets within first Range Increment. Slots: 3, Defence vs Stealth: 10, Defence vs Impair: 17	+2 6+Bodies 3 3* 5 RoF x2 1 2+Bodies Gun, Self-Propelled 2 4 Lock On +2, Low Tech, Works in Liquid, *Strong Hit (5–6) vs Targets within first Range Increment.	+2 6+Bodies 3 3* 5 RoF x2 1 2+Bodies Gun, Self-Propelled 2 4 14 Lock On +2, Low Tech, Works in Liquid, *Strong Hit (5–6) vs Targets within first Range Increment. Slots: 3, Defence vs Stealth: 10, Defence vs Impair: 17	+2 6+Bodies 3 3* 5 RoF x2 1 2+Bodies Gun, Self-Propelled 2 4 14 3 Lock On +2, Low Tech, Works in Liquid, *Strong Hit (5-6) vs Targets within first Range Increment. Slots: 3, Defence vs Stealth: 10, Defence vs Impair: 17

20

Episode 6: The Battle of Mishpacha

A stadium, you are inside a stadium. At least that is what you mistake it for initially. Yet this is a giant bay, larger than any you have seen. At first, you think it empty – then you look up. Hanging like sleeping bats, legs curled inward, are hundreds if not thousands of Mechonids. One might begin an invasion with such a force.

Cain turns toward you, the cube floating over his head – only it is no longer Cain. The cube has made him larger, pumped his muscles and caused his eyes to glow with a purple malevolence. He is a monster now, one shot through with what looks like circuitry. The cube and he share a purple field between them. When Cain speaks, his voice is filtered through digitized static. As he speaks, the portal rages behind him.

"They are gods. Surely you can see that now. We are the scourge of worlds. They are the true heirs to humanity. We are the blight upon their universe. No more. I shall wake them all. I shall genuflect before the Great Leader. Observe, even now, how our pitiful, biological efforts fail against the might of a Mechonid Harbinger!"

With that, one entire wall becomes transparent as if space itself had suddenly invaded the room.

Missiles twine toward you from out of the stars. The impact blooms and blinds you temporarily as phosphenes burn in your vision. As it clears, you see a host of Legion and Kaltoran craft making strafing runs against the Harbinger. Energy beams arc into the night, and these ships are destroyed. A small fleet has assembled, Kaltorans, Corporation and Legion alike failing to harm this juggernaut in which you find yourselves.

It is only then you realize the room itself has no oxygen. All the air comes from the portal, and that appears to be slowly closing.

No time to worry about that though, for Cain's eyes rage with purple fire as Mechonids above begin to come to life. With that, Cain himself attacks! Things are about to scale up significantly. As the PCs follow Cain through the portal, they all arrive inside the cargo bay of the Harbinger they saw fighting at the beginning of Episode Five.

The climactic fight takes place inside this bay. At this point, Cain is no longer recognizable. He has grown in size, his body warped by the purple energy of the cube. Likewise, the cube has warped his mind. Ultimately, he suffers the same fate as the Archons who first tried to utilize the Mechonids – he is killed by that which he sought to control.

The Mechonid Harbinger

At this point, Cain attacks in conjunction with the Mechonids. His goal is to kill these biological threats and then submit himself wholly to the cube and the Mechonids.

The cargo bay is really designed to hold legions of Mechonids. They are only just starting to activate. The Harbinger is a self-piloting machine. Its sole occupants are Mechonid soldiers – except for today.

As noted in the descriptive boxed text, the room has no air, for the Mechonids have no need of air. Only the portal – still tied to Mishpacha – offers oxygen. This in conjuction with the waking mechonids puts a timetable on the battle. As the combat goes on, describe the portal narrowing and the Mechonids waking. Make the players sweat. The team has Cain to defeat, and they still need to secure the cube. You may also wish to update the players on the status of the Battle of Mishpacha raging outside. It goes poorly for the organics.

Cain holds his ground as he uses the Mechonid cube to assault the PCs with massive bursts of purple energy. Their goal is to kill the biologicals.

The PCs are intentionally up against more than they can handle, but a kind of deus ex machina intervenes. Remember, this is a linear adventure to introduce the Mechonids, so there is more cinema here than player agency. Sometimes that's OK.

Suggested Encounter (for 4 PCs): x1 Cain

xl Quantum Orb

Theatre of the Mind Combat: Out Matched (14+).

Suggested Battle Map



Weapon Hit End Dmg Crit Rng Clips Ammo Load RoF Wgt Type & Variation Cost Quantum Bolts 24 4 (+3d6) -2 6* 3 2* Inf Gun, Quantum Ч 2 Lock On +2, Energy, Natural, Jam (1-2), *Optional: (Set Up 1, Pull Down 1, +2 Rng and +2 End Dmg),

Race / Var / Trait	Requirements	Benefits	Disadvantages
Mechonid	NPC	At the start of your Turn, deal 5 radiation Endurance Damage to all non Robot characters	
		within 30 Spaces of you.	
Monstrous	Nemesis NPC	Ignore 1st Suppressed Effect each against you Turn.	Character takes up 4 spaces (normally 1).
Plant Feet		Optional: If you Set Up 2 (and gain Pull Down 1) gain +2 Hit and Range on a non Melee Weapon.	
Suppression Fire		Str Hit: Suppression Fire (Damage, Does not Require Hit, RoF 3+ Crit Dmg 4+) Target is Suppressed.	

Quantum Orb

Enemy Type: Henchmen

*Cain produces one of these at the start of EACH of his Turns. Each Body takes their Action separately (not as a group). All Effects affect each Body separately (not as a group). When an Orb Body makes an Attack, destroy that Body. May not Attack during the Turn they enter the Combat Area. Orbs take their Actions during Cain's Turn.

Hit	End Dmg	Crit	Rng	Clips	Ammo	Load	RoF	Type & Variation	Cost	Movement	Defence	Armour	Bodies
-2	8+Bodies	Ч	-	-	-	-	1	Melee	1	Ч	16	2	*
Splash 2	, Small, Slow,	Energy,	Blunt, Stror	ng Hit (5–6).								
Slots: 3, Defence vs Stealth: 12, Defence vs Impair: 19													
Complex,	Endless, Targ	getable S	hot										
	-2 Splash 2 Slots: 3,	-2 8+Bodies Splash 2, Small, Slow, Slots: 3, Defence vs S	-2 8+Bodies 4 Splash 2, Small, Slow, Energy, Slots: 3, Defence vs Stealth: 12	–2 8+Bodies 4 – Splash 2. Small, Slow, Energy, Blunt, Stror	-2 8+Bodies 4 Splash 2. Small, Slow, Energy, Blunt, Strong Hit (5-6; Slots: 3, Defence vs Stealth: 12, Defence vs Impair: 1	-2 8+Bodies 4 Splash 2. Small, Slow, Energy, Blunt, Strong Hit (5-6). Slots: 3, Defence vs Stealth: 12, Defence vs Impair: 19	-2 8+Bodies 4 Splash 2, Small, Slow, Energy, Blunt, Strong Hit (5-6). Slots: 3, Defence vs Stealth: 12, Defence vs Impair: 19	-2 8+Bodies 4 1 Splash 2, Small, Slow, Energy, Blunt, Strong Hit (5-6). Slots: 3, Defence vs Stealth: 12, Defence vs Impair: 19	-2 8+Bodies 4 1 Melee Splash 2, Small, Slow, Energy, Blunt, Strong Hit (5-6). Slots: 3, Defence vs Stealth: 12, Defence vs Impair: 19	-2 8+Bodies 4 1 Melee 1 Splash 2, Small, Slow, Energy, Blunt, Strong Hit (5-6). Slots: 3, Defence vs Stealth: 12, Defence vs Impair: 19	-2 8+Bodies 4 1 Melee 1 4 Splash 2, Small, Slow, Energy, Blunt, Strong Hit (5-6). Slots: 3, Defence vs Stealth: 12, Defence vs Impair: 19	-2 8+Bodies 4 1 Melee 1 4 16 Splash 2, Small, Slow, Energy, Blunt, Strong Hit (5-6). Slots: 3, Defence vs Stealth: 12, Defence vs Impair: 19	-2 8+Bodies 4 1 Melee 1 4 16 2 Splash 2, Small, Slow, Energy, Blunt, Strong Hit (5-6). Slots: 3, Defence vs Stealth: 12, Defence vs Impair: 19

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When Cain is Close Defeated (or the PCs are)

He screams:

"No! Why have thou forsaken me?"

The cube disconnects from Cain and floats to the center of the great bay. The Mechonids stop, frozen for an instant in time. Then they turn to Cain, their eyes ablaze with what you'd swear was anger.

With that, they fire their disintegrator beams in unison and Cain, or the creature who Cain became, is pulled apart at the seams. The cube, too, seems to join in. A beam of light envelops the disappearing Cain and stretches him out like light at the edge of a black whole. His scream fills the remaining oxygen in the chamber.

"The light! History! I see it all! I see how we began! Oh, if only I had time to...."

And then he is gone. His particles scattered across space-time. And then? Then the Mechonids return their attention to you

You should run.

The PCs have just enough time to run toward the closing portal and return planet side before the Mechonids fire. There is no gaining the cube. They have escaped with their lives, and this must be enough.

Endings

Once back on the cliffs of Mishpacha (where the portal feeds), the team witnesses the Harbinger above.

Above, the battle ends as the Harbinger emits a series of beams that damage every vessel attacking it. It then activates its Jump Drive, causing an Aurora Borealis in the sky. The great rainbow of colors momentarily blinds you. The portal glows like a crack in space into which the Harbinger flies. In an instant, it is gone.

Your comms are working again, and a strange, repeating voice echoes from them. It is a single word, spoken in the static-laden voice of the dead Cain- "WAKE".

The Harbinger Takes the Cube

The ship cares nothing for Cain himself. The cube must be protected. Once it has the cube, the ship jumps away.

Epilogue

The characters have been through a lot in a short time span. From the jungles of Mishpacha to a forgotten Archon facility, they have pursued an ancient human artifact. A battle between the Legion, Kaltorans and the Harbinger nearly ended in disaster. Only a few vessels remain.

What follows are the most likely results of the PCs actions and those of NPCs during the adventure. The GM may wish to turn this adventure into the start of a campaign, ideas for that are provided.

Immediately After the Climax

Cain is dead. He suffered the same fate as the Archons before him, a kind of poetic justice. The team failed to secure the cube. Milo or the Kaltorans agree to pay them anyway, but Milo won't pay them their bonus. No one could be expected to prevail against this newly awoken threat.

The Kaltorans and Yoyodyne debrief the PCs. Everybody is very, very worried about the Mechonids. Some few living Nephilim remember them, but their threat is largely legendary. Milo and the Kaltorans share information with the team so that the PCs might better explain what happened. Both sides want to make sense of this new threat.

What Milo Knows

Milo serves as a GM device to clear up any missing pieces for the PCs. Throughout the adventure, they have encountered many strange discoveries and plots. Milo can help tie everything together if the PCs have not already done so.

- » The cube is a human artifact. Milo did not mention this when he first hired the PCs. It is believed to be one of a dozen such objects.
- » Cain and Rachel are members of the Seekers, a cult devoted to worshipping, and waking, their Mechonid gods.
- » The Mechonids were an amazing tool during the Great War. Created by the Archons based on human technology, the Mechonids killed many Nephilim. However, they soon turned on their creators and all biological life.
- » The cube synched with the Ley Line and sent a message the Corporation believes was spread system-wide or beyond. It was one word: "Wake."
- » The Mechonid threat scares the hell out of Milo.

The Fate of Other NPCs

The adventure features an array of NPCs whom the characters met. Some may have accompanied them on part (or the entirety of) their Mishpacha mission. Suggestions for what becomes of them are outlined below.

Sarah Vortice

Sarah made the discovery of a lifetime, but other powerful interests do not want her to share these. Where she goes next is up to the GM, but she likely won't let the Mechonid discoveries go. She is an archaeologist above all. Sarah may therefore oppose the Yoyodyne's desire to keep the incident under wraps.

Rachel Colson

Rachel escaped. She is a Seeker and returns to her people to inform them of events that transpired. The Seekers are overjoyed. Their gods are awake again. The Haven system may be in grave danger, but the Seekers now have living gods. Rachel may appear in a later adventure tied to the Mechonids.

Cain Colson

Cain is dead, the victim of the same hubris which destroyed the Archons.

Dr. Jenna Riser

Dr. Riser has PTSD after what she has endured. Her previous obsession with the Archons has turned into a kind of madness. She spends sometime afterward in a sanitarium. Upon release, she disappears. Perhaps, she joins the Seekers. Perhaps, she has plans of her own.

Dr. Jezebel & Dr. Daneil Slip

The resolution of the love triangle between Jezebel, one of the PCs, and Daniel Slip was doomed from the start. If Daniel was killed, Jezebel blames the PC whether it was his fault or not. If he lives, she goes back with him. She wants no part of the dangerous life and disregard for others that surrounds the PC. She may appear later in the campaign with her husband. Or, perhaps, she leaves her husband, the strain of their experience (and the her lingering feelings for the PC) driving a wedge between them.

Dr. Solomon Ketch

Ketch is the least affected by the experiences on the planet. If he survived Mechonid revenge, he is more fascinated with them than ever. Ketch is a sociopath. His only interest is the pursuit of knowledge now. Everyone else is expendable. Ketch was already on the precipice of this mental disorder: the adventure just tipped him over the edge. He might appear later as an enemy.

What Happens to the Organizations?

The Corporation and the Kaltorans

The Corporation at large and the Kaltorans all have interest in investigating the Mechonids. Such an enemy might even aid relations between the various races should the Mechonids return in force.

In any case, both groups want more information, and the PCs are the most qualified to find some. Follow up scenarios might involve either side hiring the team to follow up a Mechonid lead. Seekers of the Saviour in Steel

The cult devoted to the Mechonids has had their first great success. They sent a message to wake the Mechonid race. Their gods are returning.

However, the adventure suggests the cult itself may be attached to the Mechonids in some deeper way. At the GM's discretion, Seeker Celebrant Mortogus is actually a Mechonid spy. At some time during his service in the Legion, while battling Mechonids in some remote place, he was captured. Did the Mechonids perhaps do something to him?

The Mechonids

The Mechonids are back! All over the system, and perhaps beyond, Mechonids are waking. They could turn into an enormous threat if united.

Ideas For a Campaign

The adventure might have ended, but that does not mean everything was resolved. The Mechonids could become the focus of an entire campaign. This new threat, now awake, unites under a mysterious leader. Is the leader an individual or the product of a massive distributed mind?

According to Milo, the cube the PCs encountered in this adventure is only one of many. What are they made for? Did humanity purposely leave them behind? If so, why?

These questions can lead to an extended series of adventures centered on racing to find the other cubes while competing against the Mechonids, Nephilim, and others. The Mechonids are, after all, built using human technology. Are they, perhaps, the natural heirs to humankind? Certainly, they believe themselves to be.

Whatever mysteries lie behind the Mechonid menace could lead to all out war in the system. That makes for an exciting backdrop against which to write your own adventures. At the heart of it all is humanity, the progenitor race that disappeared 10,000 years ago. What became of them? Are they still there as Cain Colson believes? Is it possible their invisible hand guides the Mechonids even now?

There is no limit to the direction in which this adventure's end could take you and your players. Enjoy further exploration of the Fragged Empire universe!

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See: www.fraggedempire.com for a full list of Fragged Empire products, free resources and tutorials.

Genetic Spectres

An Adventure Suitable for Characters with 6–10 Current Resources. Writen by Nicolas Logue & Chris Lites.

As the Great War ground to a halt, the Archons watched their great empire reduced to embers like a handful of stars against the black of night. When the last of them lay dying, they made final efforts to undo those mechanical monsters they created to fight X'ion's Nephilim horrors.

Yet, the Archons' creations were not wholly their own. They fused human robotics with bio-disintegration weaponry, creating the fearsome Mechonid. The Archons thought themselves the masters of these machines. They were wrong.

The technology upon which the Mechonids were based stretched back to the days of time-lost humanity. Taking what they could find in human records and ruins, the Archons recreated human-made robots as best they could. Yet the Archons did not possess the knowledge of those who created them and, in their arrogance, they brought about their own undoing. The robots the Archons created served them well at first, dealing devastating defeats to the Nephilim... but soon the creations turned upon their masters and on all biological life.

The Archons and the war are a hundred years gone and the Mechonid threat largely forgotten. These strange mechanical creations went into hibernation at the end of the war and have not reappeared since.

Until now....



www.fraggedempire.com Created by Wade Dyer

