

AETHERIC HEROES

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<i>Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Advanced Class Guide</i>	ACG
<i>Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Advanced Player's Guide</i>	APG
<i>Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Occult Adventures</i>	OA
<i>Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Pathfinder Unchained</i>	PU
<i>Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Ultimate Combat</i>	UC
<i>Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Ultimate Equipment</i>	UE
<i>Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Ultimate Intrigue</i>	UI
<i>Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Ultimate Magic</i>	UM

THE AETHERA SYSTEM



HAUYNE

KASARA

ERRYN

OEMATRA

TILANNIEH

ALETA

CHEMARDRA

ARAKHU

CHAPTER

SURESTRA

I. AETHERA

II. ASHRA

III. AKASAAT

IV. KIR-SHARAAT

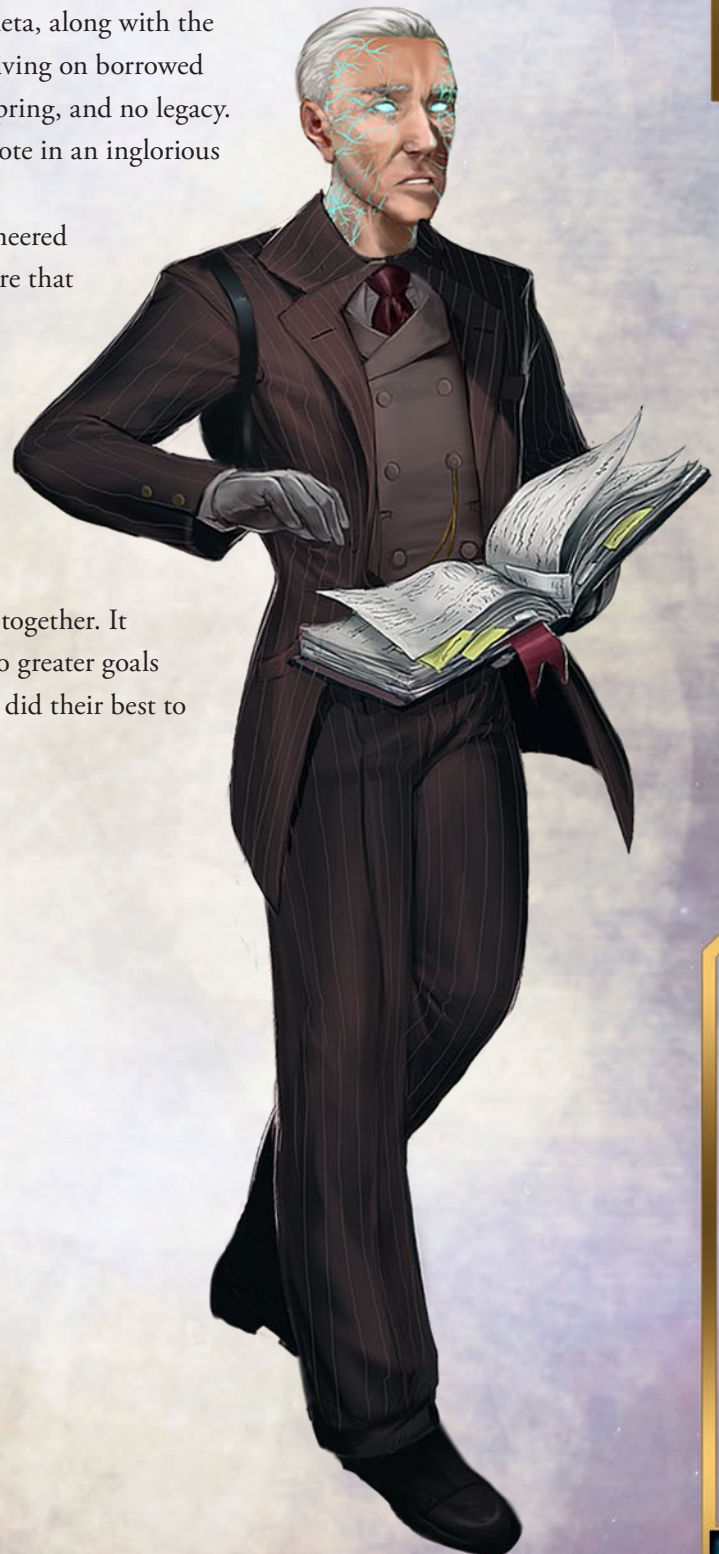
V. AMRITA BELT

VI. SERAOS

VII. ORBIS AUREA

ALETA doesn't celebrate a birthday. Nor does he even know when that would be. Not that he has any family to celebrate with. He wouldn't know which one to celebrate in the first place: his human birth, or his infused rebirth. All he knows is that he was reborn as an infused some time in the year 3996, and that his time is running short. While Aleta has the appearance of a human male in his sixties, he was only in his twenties when he volunteered for infusion. The aetherite coursing through his veins has taken a toll on his body, and he doesn't have much time left. Aleta, along with the remaining infused still alive after the Century War, are living on borrowed time. They are a scattered people with no future, no offspring, and no legacy. The infused are doomed to be naught but a grizzly footnote in an inglorious war.

In the Century War, Aleta used to have purpose. Engineered for war, he was a dutiful soldier whose only memories were that of his singular purpose: fighting. Aleta suspected that he was a wizard in his former life on account of his quick grasp of arcane scholarship, but those skills were only important as a tool of warfare. The past didn't matter when the Century War demanded so much from combatants on both sides. Only in peacetime did the void in Aleta's mind begin to gnaw at him. When he lost his duty as a soldier, he lost the only thread tying his life together. It was a common story among infused veterans, left with no greater goals and swept under the rug by their makers. The Hierarchy did their best to



ALETA
INFUSED WIZARD
(SPELL SAGE) 1

ALETA

Male Infused wizard (spell sage^{ACG}) 1

LN Medium humanoid (aether, human)

Init +2; Senses Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex)

hp 6 (1d6)

Fort -1, Ref +2, Will +7

Immune aetherite radiation

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger -1 (1d4-1/19-20)

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 1st; concentration +4)

1st—[color spray](#) (DC 14), [mage armor](#)

0 (at will)—[acid splash](#), [detect magic](#), [light](#), [read magic](#)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st; concentration +2)

At will—[open/close](#), [mage hand](#)

1/day—[shield](#)

STATISTICS

Str 8, Dex 14, Con 8, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 12

Base Atk +0; CMB -1; CMD 11

Feats [Arcane Strike^B](#), [Iron Will](#), [Scribe Scroll](#)

Skills Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (planes) +8, Perception +5, Spellcraft +8

Languages Aklo, Erahthi, Hymnas, Giant

SQ focused spells, psychic bond (DC 11; 4 bonds), telekinetic guidance (15 ft.), spell study

Combat Gear [potion of cure light wounds](#), [scroll of burning hands](#) (2), [scroll of expeditious retreat](#), [scroll of scorching ray](#); Other Gear spellbook (all 0-level spells and prepared spells plus [magic missile](#), [searing sight](#), [sleep](#), and [vanish](#)), [standard aetheric capacitor^{ACS}](#) (3 au)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Focused Spells (1/day) (Su) Once per day Aleta's understanding of spells allows him to increase his caster level by 4 for a single spell he casts.

Psychic Bond (Su) Aleta can forge a psychic bond with another creature that has the aether subtype. Creating this bond requires both creatures remain in physical contact for 1 minute. An unwilling target of psychic bond may negate the effect with a successful Will save (DC 11). After a successful bond, both creatures gain a +4 racial bonus on Sense Motive checks made against one another and a +4 racial bonus on Bluff checks made to pass secret messages. Once per day, Aleta can share thoughts with one or more creatures he is psychically bonded with as though they are all under the effect of mindlink^{OA}. Aleta can be bonded with a maximum of 4 creatures at once.

Spell Study (Su) Aleta's understanding of the spells of bards, druids, and oracles is so great that he can use his own magic in an inefficient, roundabout way to duplicate those classes' spells. Once per day, a spell sage can spontaneously cast any spell on the bard, cleric/oracle, or druid spell list as if it were a wizard spell he knew and had prepared. Casting the spell requires Aleta to spend 1 full round per spell level of the desired spell (if the spell is on multiple spell lists indicated above, using the lowest level from among those lists) and requires expending two prepared spells of that spell level or higher; if the spell's casting time is normally 1 full round or longer, this is added to the casting time. For example, if Aleta wants to use spell study to cast [cure light wounds](#) (bard spell level 1st), he must spend 2 full rounds casting and expend two prepared wizard spells of 1st level or higher.

Telekinetic Guidance (Su) When in zero gravity (or affected by [levitate](#)) Aleta gains a fly speed equal to half his base speed.

forget that the infused were ever made, so the infused themselves were discarded like obsolete equipment.

Once Aleta was combat-ready, the infused was assigned to a team who specialized in boarding enemy vessels and pacifying crews. While some infused managed to find a semblance of family in the camaraderie they shared with each other, Aleta was the only infused in his team and was thus denied even that basic familial support. The boarding team suffered high casualty counts as a result of their dangerous assignments, and in time, the names and faces of the new recruits blurred together in Aleta's mind. While he had the skill to protect himself and accomplish his mission objectives, he couldn't save everyone he worked with. Keeping his distance from his team members was a coping mechanism, so that their deaths wouldn't immediately hurt so much.

There were many horrors that Aleta and his team witnessed during the closing years of the Century War, from flesh-eating spores to soldiers being torn limb from limb by symbiotic monstrosities, but none could compare to the depths of a taur maze ship. During the Battle of Thycalese, Aleta had already lost half of his team by the time thousands of taur ships emerged from the Gate Hub of Kir-Shiraat's moon. Attacking both sides indiscriminately, the taur forced the Hierarchy and the erathi military into a temporary truce, rendering a hundred years of war utterly meaningless.

Aleta's team joined forces with an erathi fighter crew, burrowing into one of the innumerable maze ships in order to learn anything they could about their new and terrible foes. The living plant aethership snuck through the chaos of the battle as Aleta took stock of his new companions. He'd been made to fight erathi, but suddenly they were joining forces with him and adopting his tactics. As the aethership burrowed its way into the trench-riddled exterior of the maze ship, Aleta couldn't help but to disassociate himself from his new comrades-in-arms, expecting nothing less than a slaughter to this terrible foe. If the Century

War were to be all the infused knew, then at least he'd harden himself to face death with dignity.

When the ship's breaching door opened, the scouting team was met with eerie silence and inky darkness. Once illuminated, stone tunnels led to yet more stone tunnels, twisting and crossing each other in nearly incomprehensible patterns. The outer hull was no better, its trenches forming a trap-laden labyrinth which almost immediately killed two erathi scouts with scything blades. The maze ship was unlike anything the Aethera system had seen before, and it terrified the scouting team.

The taur didn't give the scouting team much time to quiver in their boots. A contingent of the massive creatures detected the boarding ship, and lumbered through the tunnels to meet the intruders. The taur were heard before they were seen, their clanging armor and scraping weapons echoing through the ship. Aleta erected a wall of fire from a scroll to block their path, but the taur charged through it without any regard for their safety. Unnerved, the scouting party fought back with everything they had. Aleta's fire turned the tide, but humans and erathi still numbered among the casualties.

Pressing on, the team delved deeper into the tunnels, their dread growing with every hollow footstep. Sticking to the shadows, Aleta witnessed a number of gruesome events take place. Prisoners from the Hierarchy and the erathi were being "processed" and the wounded were killed and devoured on the spot by their taur captors. Horrible creatures Aleta would later understand to be demons toiled and laboured, almost as if they were slaves. Taur corpses stacked high, with some picked clean to the bone.

The scouting team's luck would only go so far. Aleta's team stumbled upon what appeared to be a chamber of some religious importance, except for the fact that it appeared to be utterly defiled. Iconography featuring a goat-headed figure were torn and despoiled, altars were smashed, and fresh taur blood stained the tapestries. They were eating each other, for what purpose none could comprehend. All

that mattered at that moment was that the team was spotted, and the cannibalistic taur were not pleased with the intrusion.

Fighting broke out immediately, and despite the combined capabilities and technology of the allied scouts, they were severely outnumbered. Aleta ordered a fighting retreat, figuring that they would not get another chance to deliver the intel they came across. Casualties mounted as the scouts attempted to backtrack to their ship, the relentless taur fighting without regard to their own safety in order to stop the scouts from escaping. In the end, only Aleta made it to the ship. Alone and trapped in a ship he barely knew how to operate, Aleta could only wait and hope that the detached erathi aethership would be picked up, rather than being destroyed by taur cannons or drifting forever.

Shortly after Aleta's aethership broke free, the taur retreated for no discernable reason. Though he couldn't see it from his ship, Aleta learned after the fact that the taur had pulled Thycalsee itself into the dark of the Gulf, leaving without so much as a trace. With the hostilities between the Hierarchy and erathi at a standstill, the drifting aethership was picked up by a larger vessel, and Aleta was returned to the Hierarchy. Had he known what would follow, he would not have been so thankful for his survival.

After giving his initial report, Aleta was swiftly put into custody and shipped off to Akasaat with utmost haste. All he could gather from loose-lipped guards was that Aleta was one of a handful of people who had seen the inside of a maze ship and survived—most scouting parties perished. The infused was taken directly to a Hierarchy facility in Central, where he faced months of gruelling interrogation. The infused offered everything he knew, but the Hierarchy was so desperate for information that they used every method at their disposal to ensure that nothing was missed.

By the time Aleta was allowed to see the skies of Akasaat, the war came to an official close. Though Aleta was given an honorable discharge for his service, all it really amounted to was being brushed away like

the rest of the infused. His kind were living reminders of the Century War, and a blemish on the Hierarchy's history that they would do their best to cover up. Aleta's memories of the maze ship were not so easily discarded, haunting his every waking thought. Survivor's guilt set in, and the blurred faces of his former comrades stayed with him every night.

Broken and unwanted, Aleta decided that the only thing that would give him a chance of redemption would be to devote the fading years of his life to research the taur. Scattered reports from the Amrita Belt of taur encounters grew in volume, so there Aleta tries to find out whatever he can from eyewitness reports and physical evidence. If Aleta could find out how to prevent a new war brewing so quickly after the Century War ended, perhaps his life would earn greater meaning. Perhaps he could honor the faceless dead, to ensure that their sacrifices were not in vain. Perhaps the infused could be remembered as something other than a failed experiment.

NEW SPELL

SEARING SIGHT

School transmutation [fire]; **Level** cleric/oracle 1, druid 1, magus 1, shaman 1, sorcerer/wizard 1

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range Personal

Duration concentration, up to 1 minute/level or until discharged

Saving Throw Reflex half (see text); **Spell**

Resistance yes

This spell functions as *darkvision* except it also grants the subject of the spell a burning stare. At any point while the target of the spell is maintaining concentration, they may target a creature that they can see within 60 feet as a swift action. The targeted creature takes 1d4 points of fire damage per caster level and catches on fire. A successful Reflex save halves this damage and prevents the target from catching on fire. Once this effect is used the spell immediately ends.

The okanta are scattered in tribes across the frozen lands of Orbis Aurea, eyes directed toward the stars hidden behind the eternal shroud of the Nethersphere. Descended from giants, okanta are short-lived but with spirits that burn with a fire so bright that the inhospitable environment and fierce enemies that surround them have never been able to conquer them. With an inherent ability to quickly adapt to any surrounding or situation, okanta thrived in face of adversity and show an indomitable spirit well suited to their nomadic ways.

It is known that the most blessed among this race can hear sidereal whispering from the sky above. Many young okanta spend long nights on the frozen tundra, hoping to be one of the chosen who will become shamans and carry the song of the universe inside themselves. It is through the song that the okanta have been able to survive, transforming it into ballads that preserve their culture and way of life in the absence of the written word. It is the song that warns of all dangers of the past, and provides the knowledge to combat all challenges of the future—for the okanta are not only strong, but they are wise. They listen, they watch, and they always remember.

Hailing from one of the northern tribes on the continent of Karkhota, **ARAKHU** was one of the many young hopefuls who looked skyward and listened. Coming from a long line of shamans who still told stories of the glories of Haj-Harmarandh, he dreamed of one day rebuilding the city so high that it would touch the stars themselves. The



ARAKHU

OKANTA CAVALIER

(AETHERSHIP PILOT) 1

ARAKHU

Male Okanta cavalier^{APG} (aethership pilot^{ACS}) 1
NG Medium humanoid (okanta)

Init +0; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17 (+7 armor)

hp 13 (1d10+3)

Fort +4, **Ref** +0, **Will** +0; +2 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities fearless

Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor)

Melee Large earth breaker +5 (3d6+6/x3) and gore +0 (1d6+2)

Special Attacks challenge 1/day (+1 damage, +1 to hit while riding speeder), tactician 1/day (Intercept Charge, 3 rds)

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 10, **Con** 15, **Int** 10, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 15

Feats [Intercept Charge](#)^{ACG}, [Power Attack](#)

Skills Acrobatics –7 (–11 to jump), Fly –3 (+4 when piloting), Intimidate +6, Perception +1, Sense Motive +4 (+5 when opposing a Bluff check)

Languages Hymnas, Okantan

SQ aethership bond, adaptive mimicry, order of the sword, powerful build

Combat Gear *potion of [cure light wounds](#)*; **Other Gear** Large earth breaker^{UE}, splint mail, *standard aetheric capacitor*^{ACS} (60 au)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Adaptive Mimicry (Ex) Once per day Arakhu may spend 1 hour observing a creature actively using any skill that he has no ranks in. After this observation period Arakhu gains a number of ranks in the observed skill equal to his level and treats the skill as a class skill if it is not already such. This effect lasts until Arakhu dedicates time to studying a different skill in use, which then replaces his previous

selection. This ability does not grant Arakhu access to uses of a skill that are normally prohibited (such as the Elemental Harmony skill unlock for Perform) that he would not otherwise have.

Light Sensitivity: Arakhu is dazzled in areas of bright sunlight or within the radius of a [daylight](#) spell.

Powerful Build (Ex) Whenever Arakhu is subject to a size modifier or special size modifier for an opposed check (such as grapple checks, bull rush attempts, and trip attempts), he is treated as one size larger if doing so is advantageous to him. Arakhu is also considered to be one size larger when determining whether a creature's special attacks based on size (such as improved grab or swallow whole) can affect him. Additionally, he can use weapons designed for a creature one size larger without penalty. However, his space and reach remain those of a creature of his actual size. The benefits of this racial trait stack with the effects of powers, abilities, and spells that change the subject's size category.

Sword's Challenge +1 (1/day) (Ex) Once per day, Arakhu can challenge a foe to combat. As a swift action, Arakhu chooses one target within sight to challenge. Arakhu's melee attacks deal extra damage whenever the attacks are made against the target of his challenge. This extra damage is equal to the Arakhu's level. Arakhu can use this ability once per day. Arakhu takes a –2 penalty to his Armor Class, except against attacks made by the target of his challenge.

The challenge remains in effect until the target is dead or unconscious or until the combat ends. Whenever Arakhu issues a challenge, he receives a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls against the target of his challenge so long as he is astride his speeder.

Tactician (Intercept Charge, 3 rds, 1/day) (Ex) As a standard action, Arakhu can grant the Intercept Charge feat to all allies within 30 feet who can see and hear him. Allies retain this feat for 3 rounds.

ARAKHU'S SPEEDER

Large construct (aether, aethercraft)

Init +0; **Pilot** 1; **Crew** 1

DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 9, flat-footed 12 (+3 natural, -1 size)

hp 40 (2d10+30)

Fort +1, **Ref** +1, **Will** +1

Immune construct traits

OFFENSE

Speed fly 60 ft. (average; see limited mobility)

STATISTICS

Aetherdrive: 1, **Fore Slots** 0; **Aft Slots** 0;

Broadside Slots 0; **Internal Slots** 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Easy Riding (Ex) Arakhu always counts his

Fly skill as 4 ranks higher for determining the bonuses given by his selected piloting role on his speeder.

Limited Mobility (Ex) A speeder hull can move up to its listed fly speed as though it were flying. At the end of a speeder's movement, it returns to the ground as though affected by glideAPG.

Lone Pilot (Ex) A pilot for this aethership does not select a piloting role at the start of each round. Instead, the pilot counts as fulfilling every role.

Ship Luck (Su) Arakhu has a unique understanding of his speeder's quirks; faulty gauges, stubborn controls, etc. Once per day Arakhu can re-roll any one d20 roll that comes as a part of piloting or maintaining his speeder (including attack rolls made with the speeder or any mounted weapons).

Speeder Hull Speeders provide no cover to their pilot, and instead are treated like mounts. Pilots gain the benefits of mounted feats while piloting a speeder and may use the Fly skill to use the guide with knees, stay in saddle, soft fall, and fast mount/dismount Ride skill functions.

elders encouraged such dreams, even while the tribes suffered under an endless struggle against the frost giants.

Yet as Arakhu grew, those divine dreams turned into bitterness. He watched as his brothers and sisters answered the whispers of the stars that he remained deaf to. Try as he might, the song that he so desperately yearned to hear continued to elude him. In despair and wanting to prove his worth, Arakhu threw himself into battle, growing more bold and reckless with each skirmish against the frost giants. Utterly fearless and able to instantly observe the enemy and determine key weaknesses, stories of Arakhu's victories and might began to spread among his people. Still disappointed that he could not hear the song of the stars, Arakhu failed to notice that it was now his name that the tribes of the north began to sing when huddled around the fires at night.

Words of his deeds began to spread further than he could have dreamed. Wanderers who travelled from tribe to tribe carried his name on their lips, calling him "the fire that burns away the frozen night". Soon, it was not only the okanta that spoke of him, but also a nearby human settlement that had long depended on the okanta for the wisdom to survive life on Orbis Aurea. In exchange for protecting their caravans from the frost giants, he was gifted with a speeder bartered for by the tribe at the human spaceport of Wighthaven. Though considered outdated and valuable only as scrap by most standards, it was a technological wonder to the young okanta and he delighted in it. Immediately, he was able to conceive of new battle tactics that he used to further surprise and defeat frost giant ambushers, who were unprepared to counter such a foe.

Arakhu only began to realize the significance of his deeds when the taiga giants finally came to his tribe, asking not for aid of the shamans as they always had in the past, but specifically for him. The frost giants that he had so successfully been

thwarting had turned their rage upon the ancestral allies of his clan, and the neighboring taiga giants were now under relentless siege. Knowing that even if he could not aid them in battle, that his death might quell some of the fury of the frost giants, Arakhu swore himself to their aid.

When Arakhu set off with the taiga giants, he expected to go alone. Instead, many of those he had previously fought with and protected who had been inspired by his courage followed along. Even the shamans that he had envied for so long were now walking with him, and looking at him the way they looked and listened to the stars. When the warband passed the human settlement that he had often protected, word of the upcoming battle quickly spread and Arakhu was startled to see their own warriors running to join his ranks.

The trek was long and wearisome. The very environment seemed to side with the frost giants, impeding the travelers with chill winds and treacherous ice. And yet no one faltered, for each obstacle the land threw against them Arakhu was able to navigate and defeat. He listened to the advice of the elder shamans. He welcomed the technology of the humans, and he respected the tactics of the taiga giants who had been battling the frost giants since before the songs of the okanta had begun. In the middle of nowhere, with the enemy very near with overwhelming forces, the three different peoples became one.

From the beginning, the battle seemed like one that would be lost. The warband was greeted with the corpses of fallen taiga giants, and the forces of the frost giants seemed numberless. In all of the songs and stories of the okanta, the ancient foe had been driven back before, but never defeated. As darkness fell and the night grew cold, hopes dwindled and the screams of the dying filled the air. Even Arakhu fell in battle, his speeder toppled over by a frost giant's well-timed blow.

Once again Arakhu felt a familiar, old despair. He had failed to become a shaman, and now he would fail

here too when victory mattered the most. Laying in the snow, with the only warmth being his own blood that now surrounded him, he thought of closing his eyes and surrendering to the darkness behind the stars, for the stars themselves had never chosen to shine upon him.

And then he heard it—his name on the wind. It was faint, and he could not tell if it was the voice of a human, taiga giants, or okanta. Yet it was enough. It stirred a fire in his veins, and within himself he found the song he'd been searching his whole life for. It was the song of battle, of triumph, of glory. It was not his fate to listen to the whispers of the ancestors, to tell others of fate. It was his destiny to make his own.

Rising once again, Arakhu ripped the fabric of his cloak to serve as a victory banner. Looking at the battlefield and seeing all of his allies fighting side by side, he knew that it called for more than the symbol of just his tribe. Having nothing else to paint with except his blood, he stamped the banner with his bleeding hand, and held it aloft of all to see that he, Arakhu, was not yet defeated, and neither were they.

Rallied, the united forces of okanta, humans, and taiga giants did more than drive back the forces of the frost giants that night. They defeated them, nearly every single one except for a scant few that ran back to the glaciers further north. Arakhu knew that more would come, but he did not fear what the future held. He would be waiting, and he would be ready.

As celebrations broke out around him, Arakhu looked at his people and their allies and felt a nearly forgotten dream rekindled within him. It no longer felt so impossible to reclaim what had been lost. The power of a unified people was not lost to him. What would happen, he began to wonder, if all the nomadic tribes banded together? If the okanta of the north, the south, the west, and the east once more gathered under one banner, one purpose? Haj-Harmarandh might once more be a reality, and this time it was the frost giants who would lay in ruins.

Arakhu swore that until that day, he would hold his banner high.

There's a club in the most disreputable part of Complex Four where customers come from every strata of the crumbling asteroid-state. In just a scant few years, the Arcline Club went from nearly unknown hole in the wall establishment to one of the most well-respected and well-attended clubs in Complex Four.

Why is a dive in one of the most decrepit areas on an asteroid mostly known for its organized crime so magnetic? One only needs to hang around the door for a scant few moments before they begin to be able to understand: the strangest, most compelling music in all the Belt can be found here. Music that seems to reach into the listener's own secret heart and speaks of worlds and realities, epochs of time that each and every listener was able to understand. Some heard pain, some hear sorrow, and some hear chaos and brutalities unknowable. But they also hear triumph, hope, and a deep reverence for all life. They hear the music of **CHAPTER**, the phalanx cantor and self-professed shaman of sound.

Rumors abound about Chapter, who he is and where he's from. Why he rarely speaks and why his music contains such gravity. Chapter's life is one spoken of in rumor as fact and hearsay as canon. The truth, though, is a much more closely-guarded tale.

Chapter's song begins under a different title, when the name Twelve-Nineteen had weight and resonance. It began as a song familiar to all phalanx: the staccato rhythm of awakening, training and deployment. Twelve-Nineteen was born in the fields of war, born in the dropships, born among the screaming organics all around him. Yet, the entire time that he was deployed and with every plunge of his spear, he wondered—a thought that first came to him during a routine maintenance—“What good is fighting if those who war are never to see the fruits of their labor?” That question was one note of a symphony Chapter's mind would compose.



CHAPTER

PHALANX CANTOR 1

CHAPTER

Male Phalanx cantor^{ACS} 1

CG Medium construct (aether, phalanx)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;
Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 10 (1d8+2)

Fort +1, **Ref** +2, **Will** +4; **Immune** phalanx traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor)

Melee flute-long spear +1 (1d8/x3)

Special Attacks divine performance 6 rounds/day
(countersong, drowsing lullaby, fascinate, harmony of fate), hymn verse (refreshing refrain)

Cantor Spells Known (CL 1st; concentration +3)

1st (2/day)—*bless*, *cure light wounds*, *litany of weakness*^{UC}

0th (at will)—*disrupt undead*, *guidance*, *mending*, *read magic*

^H hymn spell; **Hymn Dream**

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +0; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 12

Feats Combat Balladeer

Skills Acrobatics +0 (–4 to jump), Craft (musical instruments) +4, Craft (weapons) +4, Diplomacy +7 (+11 to gather information), Knowledge (local) +4, Perception +6, Perform (wind instruments) +6

Languages Hymnas

SQ curiosity, flashback (1/day)

Combat Gear *potion of repair light damage*^{ACS} (2);

Other Gear armored coat^{APG}, flute-long spear instrument weapon^{ACS}, common artisan tools (musical instruments), *standard aetheric capacitor* (3 au)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Divine Performance (6 rnds/day) (Su) Chapter is trained to use Perform (wind instrument) to create magical effects on those around him, including himself if desired. Each round, Chapter can produce any one of the types of divine performance listed below.

Starting a divine performance is a standard action, but it can be maintained each round as a free action.

Changing a divine performance from one effect to another requires the cantor to stop the previous performance and start a new one as a standard action. A divine performance cannot be disrupted, but it ends immediately if the cantor is killed, paralyzed, stunned, knocked unconscious, or otherwise prevented from taking a free action to maintain it each round.

All divine performances affect only targets or areas the sound reaches, although creatures need not hear it to be affected unless noted by the performance. Many performances are language-dependent (as noted in the description). Deaf creatures are immune to divine performances with audible components.

Drowsing Lullaby (Divine Performance) (Su)

Chapter's song fogs foes' minds. Enemies that can hear the performance and are within 30 feet suffer a –1 penalty on attack rolls and saving throws unless they succeed at a DC 12 Will save. Creatures that successfully save are immune to Chapter's drowsing lullaby for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting effect.

Flashback (Su) Chapter can tap into the flashbacks their race experiences to gain abilities they do not normally possess. Once per day as a move action that provokes attacks of opportunity, Chapter may willingly experience a flashback to gain the benefit of a feat they don't possess. This effect lasts for 1 minute. Chapter must meet all the feat's prerequisites.

Harmony of Fate (Su) Once during his divine performance, without using an action, Chapter can glimpse a moment into the future and change his decisions to alter the outcome. When he rolls an attack roll or saving throw, but before learning the outcome, he can decide to roll again. Chapter must keep the new result even if it is worse than the old one. Chapter may use this ability once per hour.

Healing Melody: Once per day, while maintaining a divine performance, Chapter may spend a swift action to sing a melody that reinvigorates the soul, restoring 1 hit point to an ally within 30 feet.

Refreshing Refrain (Hymn Verse) (Su) The touched target is healed of 1 hit point per Hit Die it possesses and heals 1 point of ability damage, as if from a night's rest. The target of refreshing refrain can

attempt a new saving throw against one ongoing affliction, ignoring any effect from failure.

NEW FEAT

Combat Balladeer

You fought as an elite combat balladeer in the Century War and were allowed to retain your instrument weapon after your service.

Prerequisite: Human, Infused, or Phalanx. You may only select this feat at 1st level.

Benefit: You gain an instrument weapon (*Aethera Campaign Setting* 373), a special combination of masterwork weapon and masterwork musical instrument that is an identifier of your military service to the Hierarchy. Additionally, you gain a +1 bonus on Diplomacy checks made against members of the Protectorate.

The composition of this symphony was expressed in its most literal sense, through the creation of music. It passed through every sentient on every battlefield he was on, a paean for life and an expression of compassion for all those fighting, no matter what their race, their history or their mission. These feelings, of an all-encompassing joy to be alive rallied each and every fighter, not just those on his own side—more than that—and this was most vexing for Twelve-Nineteen's commanders. Vexing because for as much as Nine-Thirteen's unsanctioned and improvised musical compositions were soulful and moving, they spoke to the soul and asked it questions the mind was not ready to answer. This was his first subversive action, and it was something that Twelve-Nineteen would carry with him for the rest of his days: how to speak to innocence, without actually possessing innocence.

When the taur appeared and ended the Century War, the phalanx who was yet to call himself Chapter was found without a purpose. He left the Protectorate, left behind the horror of war and all the identity and meaning that it provided, and set to wandering the Aethera System to discover a truth he'd been seeking with every piece of music. He sought to find himself.

Nine-Thirteen first visited Hierarchy capital of Central—his first journey ever to the heart of the war machine that gave him life—so that he could better understand those who had manipulated him and his ken for their own agendas. He was vexed with what he came to understand was a prejudiced attitude towards these pretentious animals, who assumed that everything belonged to them by virtue of their mere existence. This part of his journey for enlightenment was not without its benefits as Central was the part of his journey where he developed a beginner's sense of gender, its meaning to him as an individual, and as an artifice of society. Although he was still known as his serial designation, his sense of identity was growing.

The erahtli home-world of Kir-Sharaat scared Twelve-Nineteen deeply. Enough so that his journey to Kir-Sharaat only drew as close as the outpost city of Vigilance on Kir-Sharaat's moon Orthaun. Nine-Thirteen was not yet ready to face the consequences of his actions during the war, but he was beginning to own them. On Vigilance, he tracked down and approached an erahtli scholar, one whom he implored forgiveness from as well as an eagerness to learn. He explained the tragedy of his existence, the deep horror of being a new creature and having no place in the universe, and yet the joy of life and the mystery of the cosmos.

Even though the erahtli never revealed to Twelve-Nineteen his name, what he did give him was something much more valuable: a name of his own and an idea of the larger scope of his existence. The erahtli explained that a person (which was the first time that Twelve-Nineteen had ever been referred to as such) can never allow their self to be defined by single, solitary events, but by the entire scope of their life. He

said, “You should look at the Century War as just a chapter in your long life.”

Most sentients need to sleep, or to rest for one reason or another. However, due to the way that the phalanx operates, he never knew such things. Instead, Chapter’s erahthi teacher opened a door to him to something near sleep, a concept of restful meditation. A calming of the mind and spirit that Chapter had never experienced. His dream-like visions came slowly at first, and then in a flood as the aetherite inside him truly came alive. Souls and spirits, lives lived and loves lost spun through his head. Time soon ceased to have any meaning as he sat and dreamt waking dreams, no longer struggling but at peace with himself and the larger world. Now truly accepting that there was something larger than himself that he was a part of. Something that he need not kill for. Twelve-Nineteen had been a stranger to himself, and when he awoke that stranger was gone forever.

The native okanta of Orbis Aurea were, much to Chapter’s relief, much more accommodating and welcoming than he was expecting. They were also deeply curious of Chapter and his kind, especially their aetherite “visions” that Chapter discovered while dreaming. These dreams, he learned, were said to be former lives by his fellow phalanx. Chapter stayed with the okanta of clan Arrokh for two full years, learning their stories and studying their religious traditions. The okanta of clan Arrokh, in turn, learned of the phalanx and their unique bond to aetherite. At the end of his time with clan Arrokh, Chapter left for the last bastion of the lost and searching, the Amrita Asteroid Belt.

Complex Four would become the last stop on Chapter’s journey of self-actualization, a place separate from the well-organized chaos of Central, the mystifying reaches of Kir-Sharaat, or the innumerable spirits of Orbis-Aurea. Here he saw wayward and lost, all trying to find their way in this place. The final part of his quest for self-discovery was completed when he wandered into the Arclight Club, following a rumor about the club looking for new musical talent and

his own desire to see his own self-expression reflected in a new audience. Chapter’s first night on stage was beyond thrilling, it was finally an opportunity to use his music purely for the enjoyment of it. That night, though, he found a purpose.

Chapter’s soulful music, subversive in its message of self-actualization and relinquishing of societal bonds, drew the attention of the Riders. Chapter was marked, followed, and eventually contacted by Rider agents. Their meeting focused on Chapter’s veteran status as a combat balladeer, how he used music to covertly communicate tactical information across open farcaster signals. The Rider then questioned Chapter on how he felt about the status quo, and whether he felt that the constant fear all denizens of the Aethera System lived in was a tenable situation. Little by little, Chapter could feel himself radicalized. It was a change he embraced with open arms.

Over time, Chapter and the Riders of Complex Four developed a strategy whereby Chapter would receive messages from Rider contacts and relay them to other Riders at the Arclight Club through hidden messages in the rhythm and modulation of his music.

Chapter spends the remainder of his free time traversing the Aethera System, collecting information to share with the Riders while dodging the Hierarchy’s forces across the system. Chapter’s traveling often takes him far from the Amrita Asteroid Belt, bringing his music and message with him wherever he goes. While Chapter fully believes in the mission of the Riders and the liberation of civilizations from the threat of fascism and tyranny, his motives are also not entirely altruistic. He hopes that, somewhere along his journey, Chapter will discover the inner truth of his past—his people’s past—that he glimpses in notes and melodies hidden within the fragmented tapestry of the Score. In that regard, Chapter’s entire life is the composition of one great, revelatory melody.

CHERNARDRA of clan Akkash was born of the windswept tundra lands on Orbis Aurea's continent of Tep Halaisu to a nomadic okantan tribe. Unlike other young okanta, Chernardra never dreamt of hearing the sky's call, she didn't lie in silence hoping to absorb whatever wisdom the universe had to impart, instead she chose more practical pursuits. She learned to wield a soldier's weapons, to shield herself in battle, and embraced the ancient traditions of her people. She possessed a warrior's heart, following in the footsteps of her older sibling Chezad, whom she idolized. She knew, deep in her heart, that she would one day be a champion of her people.

Chernardra trained tirelessly and fought with a ferocity few could match. She grew older, taller, and stronger than all of her peers, and her decision to become a protector of the people never once wavered. She listened intently to her elders as they told stories around the fire and she embraced the old ways. Chernardra believed, without doubt, that the artifice built in the south that pierced the shroud of the Nethersphere brought only evil to her home world and that the traditions of her people were being ripped away from them as other clans succumbed to the bribery of those from the stars. Clan Akkash was no ally to the off-worlders who settled the continent of Karkhota. They believed—Chernardra believed—that the southern clans had set aside their faith and identity in exchange for the “gifts” of a foreign culture.

As Chernardra came of age and took a lifetime mate, times for the Akkash grew increasingly dangerous as the “invaders” from Karkhota claimed large territories for themselves, fighting the frost giants and pushing them further into the migratory path of her people. As an expecting mother, Chernardra was forced to defend her home and her people



CHERNARDRA
ORANTA SHAMAN
(SPEAKER FOR THE PAST) 1

CHERNARDRA

Female Okanta shaman^{ACG} (speaker for the past^{ACS}) 1
NG Medium humanoid (okanta)

Init +0; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor)

hp 11 (1d8+3)

Fort +2, **Ref** +0, **Will** +5; +2 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities fearless

Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor)

Melee Large sickle +3 (1d10+3) and gore –2 (1d6+1)

Shaman Spells Prepared (CL 1st; concentration +4)

1st—*burning hands* (DC 14), *cure light wounds*,
magic missile^S

0 (at will)—*dancing lights*, *purify food and drink* (DC
13), *stabilize*

S spirit magic spell; **Spirit Aether**^{ACS}

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 10, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +0; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 14

Feats *Psychic Sensitivity*^{OA}

Skills Acrobatics –3 (–7 to jump), Knowledge (nature)
+4, Knowledge (history) +4, Knowledge (planes) +4,
Perception +7

Languages Hymnas, Okanta

SQ adaptive mimicry, powerful build, read aura
(Perception) 1/day, telekinetic shove

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds* (2), *potion
of shield of faith* +2; **Other Gear** dowsing rod^{OA}, hide
armor, Large sickle, *aetheric capacitor* (3 au)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Adaptive Mimicry (1/day) (Ex) Once per day

Chernardra may spend 1 hour observing a creature actively using any skill that she has no ranks in. After this observation period Chernardra gains a number of ranks in the observed skill equal to her level and treats the skill as a class skill if it is not already such. This effect lasts until Chernardra dedicates time to studying a different skill in use, which then replaces their previous selection. This ability does not grant Chernardra access to uses of a skill that are normally prohibited (such as the Elemental Harmony skill unlock for Perform) that they would not otherwise have.

Light Sensitivity (Ex) Chernardra dazzled in areas of bright sunlight or within the radius of a daylight spell.

Read Aura (1/day) (Ex) Once per day, Chernardra can examine the natural aura of a creature or object to discern the subject's alignment, emotions, health, or magic. This requires 10 minutes of concentration,

from the encroaching giants who withdrew from the south in increasing numbers, returning to their own ancestral lands on Tep Halaisu that they had long-ago abandoned. Chernardra's family and clanmates urged her to rest, to leave the battles to those not carrying the clan's next generation, but she refused.

Chernardra's stubbornness would come at a cost. The frenzy of the battle against the frost giants caused her child to begin his arrival ahead of schedule and while she fought through the pains of labor she eventually fell on the field, forced to give birth as the battle raged around her. Chezad and the other clan defenders managed to fight back the barbaric giants and help Chernardra flee toward camp but her brother

suffered a mortal wound as they escaped and survived no more than a day after they reached safety. This only strengthened Chernardra's resolve and deepened the scars of resentment towards her southern kin. She named her newborn son Chezad, in honor of her sibling, and as soon as she was able she rejoined the fight, determined to provide a safe world for her offspring to live in.

Her determination to protect her family, her people, and her own young became even more intense after her brother's loss. His death hardened her heart and she delighted in defeating their foes as they migrated across the frozen land, seeking out battles on her own where once she had waited for danger to come to her

after which Chernardra may attempt a Perception check. Pick one of four auras to read: alignment, emotion, health, or magic. You must be within 30 feet of the subject at all times during the reading.

Read Alignment Aura (DC 15 + creature's HD or item's caster level): Chernardra attempts to read the alignment aura, learning the alignment and its strength. An alignment aura's strength depends on the creature's Hit Dice or item's caster level, as noted in the description of the detect evil spell.

Read Emotion Aura (DC 20 + creature's HD or item's caster level): The colors within the target's aura reveal its emotional state. If successful, Chernardra learns the target's disposition and its attitude toward any creatures within 30 feet of it. For a number of rounds equal to the amount by which Chernardra exceeded the skill check's DC, she gains a +2 circumstance bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, and Sense Motive checks against the target.

Read Health Aura (DC 15 + creature's HD): Viewing the flow of vital force, Chernardra assess a creature's physical condition. Chernardra learns if the creature is unharmed or wounded, if it is poisoned or diseased, and whether it is affected by any of the following conditions: confused, disabled, dying, nauseated, panicked, staggered, stunned,

and unconscious. Chernardra also learns the total number of points available in its ki pool, grit pool, or similar resource.

Read Magic Aura (20 + creature's HD or item's caster level): Chernardra may attempt to determine the number and power of all magical auras on a target creature or object (see detect magic to determine a magic aura's power). If the check is successful, Chernardra can attempt Knowledge (arcana) or Spellcraft checks to determine the school or identify properties of a magic item, as normal. If the item is affected by magic aura or a similar spell, she can realize this and determine the actual properties of the item if your check result exceeds the DC by 5 or more. If the spell is of a higher level (such as aura alteration), increase this threshold DC by 2 for every spell level beyond 1st.

Telekinetic Shove (Su): As a standard action, Chernardra can perform a melee touch attack that pushes a target away with violent force. The target takes 1d4 points of damage and is pushed 5 feet directly away from Chernardra. This movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity. Chernardra can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + her Charisma modifier.

clan. Her son grew older, raised more by the tribe around him than his own mother, yet still she raged. Plagued by guilt from the part she thought she played in her brother's death, and the growing despair that the okanta would never be free from their enemies, the only peace Chernardra found was in spilling the blood of her enemies.

As The Long Night descended on Orbis Aurea, Chernardra struck out on her own, scouting ahead to keep her people safe as they made the last of their migration to the place they would winter. But, lost in her own dark thoughts, she ranged too far from the others and was set upon by frost giants. While she fought ferociously and slew several of her attackers,

too many remained for even a warrior of her skill to defeat. As she delivered the killing blow to the giant before her another thrust a weapon into her back and she fell to the ground, blood pouring from the many wounds they had inflicted. And there she stayed, too weak to move while the giants looted her possessions and left her to die on the frozen tundra, laughing as they walked away into the night.

Chernardra lay on the frozen earth, struggling to summon the will to live as she recalled the face of her son, her life's blood seeping out to stain the ground around her. She thought of her life, her family, her brother, and knew that all was lost. She hadn't been a good daughter, sibling, or mother, too enraptured

with thoughts of war, with winning, to truly be there for those she cared about. And now she would die far from her clan, alone, as she believed she deserved. Her thoughts circled, fragmented, drifted away, until she was left with nothing but the quiet of the night. Her eyes drifted shut and Chernardra accepted her fate, sending only one silent plea to the universe that her son would not be the one to find her frozen corpse.

But this was not how she was meant to pass, and the Song of the Stars had plans for her still. As she lay there, her consciousness little more than an empty void, she heard its faintest melodies. A quiet summons, growing louder by the moment. Chernardra's ancestors called out to her, begging her to fight, to stay alive so that her true purpose could be fulfilled. She heard the voice of her brother, saw the face of her son, and though she never wished for it, never sought it, she heard the Song of the Stars summoning—no—commanding her to live. She was adrift on a sea of peaceful warmth and song. Within her mind's eye she saw flashes of her people, her clan and others, and suddenly she knew, just as strongly as she had once known that she wanted to protect her clan, she knew that she couldn't complete this task the way she had begun. That the time for blind adherence to the old ways had passed. The southern clans hadn't forsaken their heritage, they had merely adapted with the times and grown, while the northern clans languished in obstinence. Chernardra firmly believed the only hope for her people's future lay in allying themselves with the off-worlders.

Chernardra awoke surrounded by humans, scouts from the metropolis of Wighthaven that had been following the very frost giants Chernardra was waylaid by. She hurt beyond belief but by some miracle she had survived. Chernardra had never seen a human up close before, and to her they seemed diminutive and weak, and she wondered how they managed to survive on such a harsh world at all. Chernardra learned that she was in an outpost on the southern coast of Tep Halaisu, one where human, okanta, and other species she had never even heard of worked in unison. It was

in this outpost that Chernardra discovered that the off-worlders were not so different from her own people in many ways. They loved, they laughed, they took in a wounded okanta just as other okanta had taken them in when they first arrived here. And they offered their aid to fight back against the frost giants. Safety in numbers. Chernardra knew this was the right thing to do. That blind hatred and fear of change would be her clan's deathblow, not its salvation.

The Song of the Stars had taught Chernardra that all things change, from things as large as worlds, to things as small as a single individual. In her way, Chernardra became an agent of change. She embraced her new calling and ability to hear the Song of the Stars—what the humans called the Score—and the shamanistic powers that it afforded. For a time she stayed with the off-worlders, then returned to her people to begin the long process of turning their vision away from the past and toward the future.

For her clan, acceptance that humanity and their scions were allies was a bitter pill to swallow. Chernardra struggled for months, acting as a liaison between her clan and okantan representatives of the Paragon Ascendancy in Wighthaven. Ultimately, after many a long and tense negotiations, the Akkash clan warmed to the idea of exchange of ideas and traditions, not only with the off-worlders, but also with their southern kin.

But Chernardra was not born to be a diplomat, and in her own opinion she felt ill-suited to the task. The song of her ancestors called her elsewhere, away from her people, toward a destiny written in the stars hidden from Orbis Aurea. She followed that calling.

Chernardra follows that song, beyond the borders of her clan, bringing the wisdom of her ancestors to the wider world while learning all she can about other cultures and traditions to bring back to her clan, to strengthen them and build new bonds. It would take time for clan Akkash to change in the ways Chernardra knows they can, but she is determined to affect that change in her own way.

There are illegal chapbooks sold in certain shady markets of Central that tell tales of life in the Wasteland—romanticized accounts of adventure and derring-do, with handsome explorers and wondrous treasures, and every one of them ends happily for the protagonist. Should **ERRYN** of Teratha ever meet the writer of such a novel, he would punch them directly in the face. While there may be adventure out there in the wastes, and there may even be wondrous treasures to be found hidden in ancient ruins, the explorers are more likely to be scoundrels, the bountiful adventure can easily lead to death, and the happy endings never seem to come.

Erryn was born in the shadow of the Terathan Spire, and there he came to manhood in the scrap-metal city that grew at the feet of the scavenger-barons. Growing up in Teratha wasn't an easy life, certainly not for Erryn—none of Central's luxuries to be found, only the cramped quarters of his family's home above a mechanic's shop. It was owned and worked by his mother, from whom he inherited both a talent for and fascination with technology. Their income was supplemented by whatever his father—an unregistered sorcerer-for-hire—could bring in. This kept them comfortable but not affluent, at least until the boy's eighth year. This was the year he learned the first of many harsh lessons the world had to offer.

Erryn remembers his parents fighting, remembers his father insisting that his “plan” would lift them up out of their station and place them in a higher one, a more comfortable life for them all. Some artifact he'd found, some precious piece of salvage that he'd recovered during a job and didn't think they could properly sell in Teratha. Central was where the market for such



ERRYN
HUMAN HUNTER
(TECH BONDED) 1

ERRYN

Male Human hunter^{ACG} (tech bonded^{ACS}) 1

CG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; Senses Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10 (+3 Dex)

hp 10 (1d8+2)

Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +0

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee handaxe +1 (1d6+1/x3)

Ranged scrap rifle +3 (1d10/x3; misfire 1–5)

Tech-Bonded Hunter Spells Known (CL 1st; concentration +4)

1st (2/day)—*enlarge person*, *repair light damage*^{ACS}

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *light*, *mending*, *spark*^{APG} (DC 13)

STATISTICS

Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 11, Cha 10

Base Atk +0; CMB +1; CMD 14

Feats [Point-Blank Shot](#), [Precise Shot](#)

Skills Acrobatics +3, Craft (firearms) +7, Craft (mechanical) +7, Disable Device +7, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (engineering) +7, Knowledge (geography) +7, Perception +4, Spellcraft +7, Stealth +7, Survival +4

Languages Erahthi, Hymnas, Okantan, Terran

SQ aethertech empathy +1, construct companion (Kitscha)

Other Gear artisan tools (firearms), artisan tools (constructs), handaxe, mechanical components worth 30 au, scrap rifle^{ACS} (20 bullets), *aetheric capacitor*^{ACS} (9 au)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Aethertech Empathy (Su) Erryn can tune into the vibrations of aetherite and understand its function as a standard action. This ability grants Erryn hunter a +4 circumstance bonus on any Knowledge check pertaining to aethertech or constructs with the aether or aethership subtype.

This ability also functions as a Diplomacy check to improve the attitude of an unintelligent construct with the aether subtype. Erryn rolls 1d20 and adds his hunter level and his Charisma modifier to determine the aethertech empathy result. Generally, influencing a construct in this way takes 1 minute but, as with influencing people, it might take more or less time. Erryn may attempt an aethertech empathy check on a construct with an Intelligence of 1 or 2, but takes a –4 penalty on such checks. For constructs with an Intelligence of 3 or higher use Diplomacy.

Construct Companion: Erryn can use Knowledge (engineering) instead of Handle Animal for all purposes involving her construct companion, though he suffers a –5 penalty on these checks due to the construct companion's unusual nature.

If Erryn's construct companion is destroyed, he may rebuild his companion with new components,

wonders lay, he said, and he'd be able to slip past the Vanguard easily with the aid of his magic and without them ever being the wiser. He remembers his mother arguing with tears in her eyes that the money wouldn't matter if she didn't have her husband anymore. He was resolute, however, determined to win his family a new life. After he walked out that door, Erryn never saw his father again. Whether he was killed by the Vanguard or thrown into some cell to rot, it was all the same to a boy that got to grow up bereft of a father.

Life was harder after that, and once he grew a bit older his mother relied on him a great deal to run

errands on her behalf. Time she would normally spend on doing such things spent working in the shop instead. It was out there growing up on the streets of Teratha that Erryn learned his next lessons in the world's cruelty. The occasional beating or robbery led him to seek out protection, and before long he was sheltering in the arms of one of the many urchin-gangs that scampered across the metal rooftops and down the dirty alleyways of Teratha, a gaggle of children around his own age called the Blue Sparks. Under the protection of a scoundrel named Andhu, Erryn was able to carry out his errands unmolested and also learned to scavenge from the city itself, where the

requiring 50 au in raw materials per level and 24 uninterrupted hours of research and development in a suitable environment for crafting a construct.

Share Spells with Companion (Ex): Erryn may cast a spell with a target of "You" on Kitscha (as a spell with a range of touch) instead of on himself. Erryn may cast spells on his animal companion even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the companion's type (construct). Spells cast in this way must come from a class that grants a construct companion. This ability does not allow the companion to share abilities that are not spells, even if they function like spells.

KITSCHA

N Small construct (aether)

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +2 natural, +1 size)

hp 24 (3d8+10)

Fort +3, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2

Immune construct traits

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +3 (1d4+1)

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 15 (19 vs. trip)

Feats [Skill Focus](#) (Perception), [Skill Focus](#) (Stealth)

Skills Acrobatics +7 (+15 to jump), Perception +8, Stealth +14; Racial Modifiers +4 to survival when tracking by scent

SQ advanced programming (4/day; farcaster component)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Construct Companion: Erryn can repair damage to Kitscha by spending 2 hours on repairing damages and spending 10 au in mechanical components. At the end of this time Erryn must succeed at a DC 20 Craft (mechanical) check. If successful he restores half of Kitscha's total maximum hit points. If this check fails, Erryn wastes 50% of the raw materials and repairs no damage.

Kitscha is destroyed if it reaches 0 hp. If Kitscha is destroyed, Erryn may rebuild his companion with new components, requiring 50 au in raw materials per level and 24 uninterrupted hours of research and development in a suitable environment for crafting a construct.

Farcaster Component (Ex) Erryn's companion Kitscha can broadcast a short range message no longer than 1 minute as a standard action out to a range of 1 mile that can be picked up by any *farcaster*^{ACS} set to receive transmissions. This message can be delivered by any creature but must be transmitted immediately after being spoken.

Tricks: Kitscha knows the following tricks: attack, come, down, fetch, heel, sneak, stay.

best scrap heaps were and what warehouse windows could be wriggled through safely to find choice bits of machinery to "repossess".

He didn't understand his mother's displeasure, at least not for a time. He was bringing in extra money, he was helping out the shop, and he even was learning swiftly under his mother's tutelage how to do simple repairs himself. He didn't understand until how serious the games he and his friends were playing became obvious. Not until one of them was dragged off by the Rust Knights for thieving, not until one of them was caught hiding a handful of aetherite capacitors from Andhu and was made an example

of. It was too late, but he finally saw the treacherous path that he was walking on and realized that it ended either in a cage, as a body in a scrap heap, or being the one smiling Andhu's crooked smile.

The realization scared him, and he was looking for a way out.

Fortunately for Erryn, he found one with his mother's help; one of the scavenger crews that frequented their shop had need of someone able to fit into tight spots, and at fourteen years of age, that described Erryn quite well. Before he knew it, he was finally getting his first taste of freedom out in the Akasaati Wasteland.

There was nothing that could temper the thrill of being outside of Teratha's scrap-metal walls for the first time, but he listened avidly to the tales of the crew's previous expeditions—tall as some of those tales were—and he was an eager student to the lessons of the dangers of the Wasteland. He learned of the many forms of deadly wildlife and where they roamed, of the hazardous weather and how to recognize the warning signs of its coming, and many other lessons that were begun on that first trip and continued throughout the years to come. It was the prize he came away with from that first expedition that became his obsession—and later, far more than that. It was a thing that the crew was going to abandon; a small broken construct, crafted in the shape of a fox, unlikely to bring a good price at market without going to the trouble of finding a collector or specialty dealer. Something about it fascinated the boy, though, and Erryn cashed in his share of the profits in exchange for the defunct automaton.

Erryn tinkered with that prize for the next six years, trying to figure out how its intricate mechanisms worked, how he could restore power to the piece of ancient technology and bring it back to life, repairing broken parts and reverse-engineering what he didn't understand. It was side work between jobs, as he swiftly learned the ways of the wastes, a hunter of salvage and of forgotten tech. He moved from crew to crew as needed someone with his skills—and learning more from each person with whom he served. There were losses and tragedies in such a dangerous occupation, but he'd suffered those before, and he pressed onward through life in defiance of such,

Six years, until Andhu caught up with him.

Erryn was lured out to an abandoned underground workshop in Teratha's Salvageworks by the promise of knowledge, but found only his childhood employer. He was quickly overpowered, beaten within an inch of his life, and given one last chance to "make the right choice" and go back to work for the criminal. Erryn refused, and his reward came not in the form of a bullet to the head, but the grinding finality of an iron

door barred from the outside. Andhu barred the one entrance to the workshop and left Erryn to die a slow, agonizing death in the dark.

At first Erryn tried cunning, trying to find a way to unhinge the door or flip the bar on the other side with jury-rigged tools. Nothing. Then he tried brute force, and broke his right hand for his effort. Then, after two days, came anger. Erryn lashed out, trashing what little remained in the old workshop, and even took his frustrations out on the derelict automaton he'd been trying to repair. Something in that moment, maybe the anger and maybe just the right strike against the automaton's old power core, ignited a spark both physical and metaphorical. Something awoke, not just in the construct's whirring core, but in Erryn. A flash of light, a sudden overwhelming surge of knowledge, and a ringing in Erryn's ears. He tapped into something, some long-dormant Progenitor code, some spark of power from before the Collapse, and it changed Erryn forever.

The next Erryn knew, he was awakening in a surgeon's bed, his mother wringing her hands by his bedside in heartsick worry, the vulpine machine that he'd given life to curled up beside him. He was alive. Miraculously, impossibly, alive.

The trauma of the incident, the near-death experience, the fact that Andhu still hunted for him—all of that was nothing compared to the fulfillment of a goal years in coming and the discovery of a lifetime. Erryn named his new companion "Kitscha", his father's name.

Erryn knew, though, that he couldn't remain living quietly in Teratha. Not with Andhu after him. Now that he had brought an ancient Progenitor artifact back to life he wondered what else lay out there, beyond the Wasteland.

Maybe, somewhere beyond the Wasteland, there really was a happy ending to be found after all.

HAÜYNE, like all other first-generation phalanx, was activated on an assembly line and given a numerical designation to self-identify. Häüyne was born designated Six-Thirteen, one among one hundred phalanx born of the thirteenth wave of first generation models. Häüyne's first memories were hazy, dream-like things. In her first years, she did not understand the muted and muffled visions that came before her awakening in the Teskamar Industries Automata Laboratory on Prima. Häüyne was taught nothing of her people following her awakening, nothing of her creators, their culture, or anything other than the purpose for which she was born into this world: war. Häüyne and all 100 of her "siblings", also known as a cluster, were designated as infiltration, assassination, and reconnaissance units, trained to move undetected, kill without being noticed, and relay information back to the Hierarchy. Like many phalanx, Häüyne was moved from the factories of Prima to an interplanetary battleship shortly after her awakening, having little-to-no human contact outside of combat instruction and mission briefings. As such, first-generation phalanx like Häüyne formed unexpectedly close familial bonds with the members of their awakening cluster.

In that day, Six-Thirteen appeared nearly identical to her awakening cluster. No first-generation phalanx received major chassis modification prior to activation, making them appear as a mostly homogenous legion of male-bodied machines, differentiated by a serial number stenciled on their foreheads. As Six-Thirteen, Häüyne was considered property of the Hierarchy, treated with no more rights than a pistol or a sword. She and her awakening cluster underwent rigorous training for the first month of her waking life. This period of time in phalanx development is when they are the most



HAÜYNE
PHALANX UNCHAINED
ROGUE (SNOOP) 1

HAÜYNE

Female Phalanx^{ACS} unchained rogue^{PU} (snoop^{UI}) 1

LN Medium construct (aether, phalanx)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;

Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 9 (1d8+1)

Fort +0, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1

Defensive Abilities evasion, **Immune** phalanx traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +3 (1d4/19–20) or short sword +3 (1d6/19–20) or short sword +1/+1 (1d6/19–20) or unarmed strike +3 (1d3)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 16, **Con** 10, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +0; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 13

Feats [Improved Unarmed Strike^B](#), [Two-Weapon](#)

[Fighting](#), [Weapon Finesse^B](#)

Skills Acrobatics +6, Bluff +6, Diplomacy +6 (+10 to gather information), Disable Device +6, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +6, Knowledge (local) +6, Perception +5, Sense Motive +5, Stealth +6

Languages Erahthi, Hymnas

SQ flashback (1/day), inspiration (1/day)

Combat Gear repair kit (2); **Other Gear** armored longcoat^{ACS}, dagger, short sword (2), *aetheric capacitor*^{ACS} (5 au)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Assault Leader (Ex) Once per day, when Haüyne misses with an attack on a flanked opponent, she can

designate a single ally who is also flanking the target that her attack missed. That ally can make a single melee attack against the opponent as an immediate action.

Flashback (Su) Haüyne can tap into the lingering memories of their soul to gain abilities they do not normally possess. Once per day as a move action that provokes attacks of opportunity, Haüyne may willingly experience a flashback to gain the benefit of a feat she doesn't possess. This effect lasts for 1 minute. Haüyne must meet all the feat's prerequisites.

Inspiration (+1d6, 1/day) (Ex) Haüyne has an ability similar to the investigator's inspiration class ability. She has an inspiration pool equal to half her rogue level plus her Intelligence modifier (minimum of 1). Unlike an investigator, Haüyne can only use inspiration on skill checks, not on attack rolls or saving throws. This ability is otherwise identical to the investigator class ability of the same name.

NEW EQUIPMENT

REPAIR KIT

50 AU

Weight 5 lbs.

A repair kit comes in the form of a metal or wood case filled with alchemical glue, clamps, pliers, rubber piping, scrap metal, a welding torch, and other tools necessary to make repairs on creatures of the construct type. A repair kit provides a +2 circumstance bonus on Disable Device checks used on creatures of the construct type. A repair kit is exhausted after 10 uses.

CONSTRUCTION

Craft DC 20 (mechanical)

adaptable, with both their declarative and procedural memory capable of near instantaneous mimicry of demonstrated skill and expeditious comprehension. By the time she arrived in orbit of the erahthi homeworld of Kir-Sharaat, Six-Thirteen was fully trained and ready to be deployed; unquestioning of her purpose in the world.

Six-Thirteen and her cluster began to question their own individuality and identities over the course of their decades of military service. They grappled with concepts of morality, discovered poetry and art from discarded books greedily smuggled into phalanx holding cells. Gradually, the phalanx learned about life beyond the war through the words of long dead

philosophers and poets. While the Hierarchy was aware that the phalanx had consciousness, they did not fully realize the similarity to human psychology until several rapid generations of deployment too late.

Nearly all phalanx, like any self-aware creature forced into prolonged war, suffered from some degree of post-traumatic stress. The first-generation phalanx, having fought in the Century War for decades, eventually began to suffer mental breakdowns in the field of battle. While more resilient to psychological trauma than a human, even these vigilant creatures had a breaking-point.

Six-Thirteen's breaking-point occurred during the Battle of Thorns, a notoriously bloody quagmire that cost both the humans and erahthi thousands of lives. When the nine surviving members of her awakening cluster were on a return route from a recon assignment on Kir-Sharaat, Six-Thirteen intercepted a distress signal from the H.A.V. *Dream of Twilight*, a battleship involved in routine patrols around Kir-Sharaat's moons. Six-Thirteen and her cluster landed aboard the besieged vessel, finding nearly all of the human crew dead and the survivors holed up in the communications room, fending off an erahthi boarding party. The combined assault of the surviving human crew and the newly arrived phalanx crushed the erahthi opposition swiftly. Due to their information-gathering directives, Six-Thirteen's cluster captured the majority of the erahthi boarders for later questioning.

When the derelict *Dream of Twilight* was rescued by another Akasaati warship, the H.A.V. *Argent Path*, the captive erahthi were deemed inconsequential and left aboard the *Dream of Twilight*. The crew of the *Argent Path* ordered Six-Thirteen and her cluster to initiate an overload of the aetherdrive to destroy the *Dream of Twilight* and prevent its wreckage from falling into enemy hands. The erahthi realized, quickly, what was going on and pleaded with Six-Thirteen to spare their lives. True to her training, Six-Thirteen ordered her cluster to ignore the pleas and complete their mission, overloading the ship's

aetherdrive. They then disembarked in their own ship and watched from a safe distance as the aethership was torn apart by the overloaded reactor and the erahthi consigned to death.

It would be weeks before Six-Thirteen felt the emotional toll of what had happened aboard the *Dream of Twilight*. Weeks more would pass before Hierarchy engineers identified that the irregular behavior Six-Thirteen was exhibiting was not a technical issue, but rather a psychological one. Six-Thirteen, like many other first-generation phalanx suffering from post-traumatic stress, was deemed unreliable and shipped back to Prima. Unlike a human soldier suffering from war-induced stress, the phalanx were treated as defective hardware. Six-Thirteen and the remaining members of her cluster were scheduled to be destroyed and broken down for scrap components.

Two thousand and sixty-five active phalanx awaited destruction on Prima during the final days of the Century War. Another nine thousand and thirty-two had already been dismantled. The phalanx of Prima believed that they had no other purpose beyond the war they fought, believed that the hopelessness and sadness eating away inside of their minds was a sign that they had become—what their human creators called them—defective. But a pulse had begun pounding in phalanx society prior to Six-Thirteen's arrival on Prima. A pulse of new ideas, born from voices on radio waves broadcast from Akasaat.

The seeds of a phalanx uprising started with phalanx who possessed built-in radio transmission hardware, typically those designated for signals intelligence, picking up unscheduled transmissions. These transmissions carried the voices of the people. Not the propaganda-machines of the Akasaati Hierarchy, but voices of dissent to the war: human, phalanx, even the erahthi and more denouncing the senseless violence perpetrated by both human and erahthi leadership. There were rumors spread of a phalanx rebellion building on the fringes of the Amrita Asteroid Belt, rumors of an unknown threat

emerging through the Gate Hub complex to steal one of Kir-Sharaat's moons, rumors of a mysterious spacefaring army greater than the combined might of humans and erahthi combined.

On the day Six-Thirteen was to be dismantled, no one came. Days passed with no word, the factory crew did not show up for their assigned shifts, the foundries cooled. A week later, Hierarchy military arrived to release all captive phalanx from the factory, informing them in no uncertain terms what they had been hearing fragments of over the radio: the war between humans and erahthi was over. The phalanx were released from their military service under direct orders from the Hierarchy and given full citizenship as people of Akasaat. The once-doomed phalanx in Prima's factories were given free passage to anywhere in the Aethera System they desired to go. For the first time there was no consensus among Six-Thirteen's cluster. Some of Six-Thirteen's cluster departed for the Amrita Asteroid Belt, wanting to disappear after their purpose had concluded. Others left for the remote world of Orbis Aurea on the edge of the system. Six-Thirteen took one look at the brown-gray world of Akasaat looming beyond the airless surface of Prima and knew where she wanted to be.

The Hierarchy washed their hands of the phalanx, liberating them from mandatory military service and instating them as recognized citizens of the Hierarchy with the same rights as human citizens. Many phalanx fell through the fingers of society's grasp following the war. Post-war social restructuring hit the phalanx hard, offering them few work opportunities. Those that could find work were met with derision from their human peers who felt displaced by these tireless war-machines. Many simply viewed the phalanx as a bitter reminder of the war that had claimed so many lives, and most phalanx veterans limped along without the support structure of family or friends to hold them up.

In the aftermath of the war Six-Thirteen got as far away from the military as she could. She spent much of her time working as a manual laborer in aetherite

factories in the slums of Central. Six-Thirteen's off-time was spent contemplating her life, past and present, and the nagging questions that lingered regarding the patchwork "memories" she retained from prior to her awakening. For most of her life Six-Thirteen struggled to accept her identity as a phalanx and felt—rightly so—that she was living in a shell not of her own design, a stranger within her own body. Two years after the war, Six-Thirteen approached an automata mechanic she had come to know through her factory work and took her first step to self-actualizing her freedom. Six-Thirteen had her phalanx chassis modified from the standard male-bodied archetype into one that emulated the female human form, abandoning her Hierarchy-assigned serial number and adopting—as many post-war phalanx did—a "peace name." Six-Thirteen became Haüyne, named for a blue crystalline mineral common on Akasaat. No longer saddled with the identity forced upon her by the Hierarchy, Haüyne felt some of the burden from the war lifted from her shoulders.

Just under a year after her remodel, Haüyne posted out from her job at the aetherite factory and applied for reinstatement within the Protectorate as a terrestrial peace-keeper in Central. The administration of the Protectorate were willing to overlook Haüyne's discharge in light of her otherwise exemplary record of service and astounding skills in counter-intelligence. The Protectorate were eager to gain the service of a phalanx operative of Haüyne's record, going so far as to offer her assistance in better managing her mental health, directing her to a therapist specialized in phalanx veteran needs. Within a year's time Haüyne was promoted to the rank of inspector, and worked to stem the tide of smuggling and drug trafficking through the Central arcology. As a phalanx, Haüyne had to work twice as hard as a human for her position, and must continue to do so to retain it.

Haüyne still wonders about the dreams she experienced before her awakening. But, she feels one step closer to remembering the dreamer, rather than being merely the dream.

KASARA WARDER came from a disgraced line of nobility on the human homeworld of Akasaat. The Warder family could trace its lineage back over a thousand years to the age of Luthias the Uniter and the exodus of humanity from the Wasteland to the lost Progenitor arcologies. The Warders were once held in high esteem, a powerful noble family with strong influence in the military of Akasaat. But when the Century War broke out after generations of relative peace, the Warders participated in a number of increasingly disastrous military campaigns that ultimately lowered their family's status within the Hierarchy. When Kasara's grandfather, Ederes Warder, failed to hold the line at the Battle of Prima in 3934 resulting in the loss of seven thousand lives, the Warder name had suffered too much damage to their reputation. The Warders were stripped of their status within the Council of Nobles and cast down from the Highrise district in Central.

Kasara Warder was born into this disgrace in deep space aboard a Hierarchy warship, the H.A.V. *Siren's Song*, where both her mother and father served as soldiers during the height of the Century War. Kasara grew up both aboard this aetheric warship and amid asteroid colonies dotting the Amrita asteroid belt. Kasara never knew what her homeworld looked like, never set foot on its surface until after the Century War had concluded. From the time she was able to hold a sword, Kasara was trained to follow in her family's footsteps and become a soldier, to aspire to die in battle to serve the glory of Akasaat and the Hierarchy. An honorable death in defense of the homeland would restore some of the prestige once afforded to her family, with enough blood and enough sacrifice anyone family line could find elevation to nobility, even those once disgraced. This fate, born to die in military service, was one shared by many during the last years of the Century War. It had become an accepted part of everyday life. The war had dragged



KASARA
HUMAN FIGHTER
(AETHER SOLDIER)

KASARA

Human fighter (aether soldier) 1 (*Aethera Campaign Setting*)

LG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 13 (1d10+3)

Fort +4, **Ref** +1, **Will** +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor)

Melee mwk depleted aetherite greatsword +5
(2d6+4/19–20)

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 13, **Con** 15, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 15

Feats [Cleave](#), [Power Attack](#)

Skills Acrobatics –4 (–8 to jump), Knowledge (arcana) +4, Perception +2, Survival +5; +2 to Knowledge (arcana) checks pertaining to aetherite

Languages Hymnas

SQ aether bond, aetherite familiarity

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*; **Other**

Gear trooper armor^{ACS}, mwk depleted aetherite^{ACS} greatsword, *standard aetheric capacitor*^{ACS} (3 au)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Aether Bond (Su) Kasara possesses a masterwork melee weapon crafted from depleted aetherite. This functions as a wizard's arcane bond with a weapon.

Aetherite Familiarity: Kasara's intense training and long term handling of aetherite makes her well-acquainted with the material's inner-working and other materials producing similar effects. Kasara gains a +2 insight bonus on all Knowledge (arcana) checks involving aetherite.

Depleted Aetherite Greatsword: Kasara's greatsword is fashioned from specially-prepared aetherite that is as hard as steel and can no longer hold an aetheric charge. However, the latent magical energy in the material allows her sword to penetrate damage reduction as if it were a magic weapon.

on so long that even the oldest human alive had been born during a time of constant warfare. Peace was a memory that belonged to the ghosts of their ancestors.

Kasara aspired to more than mere redemptive death in service to the Hierarchy. She aspired to seeing her family restored in her own lifetime. More than that, Kasara dreamt that one day her own children would know a life that was not framed by an age of unending war, that peace was more than a word. To those ends Kasara learned the craft of a soldier, studied techniques to better utilize aether-powered armor, she studied the tactics used in past engagements in the Century War to better understand warfare in the void. But, she also became a student of art, of poetry, of philosophy, and all the matters of thought and contemplation pushed aside to make room for the never-ending war machine that her society had become. Kasara eagerly obtained books and scrolls wherever she could, from merchants on asteroid

colonies, traders running supply lines between Akasaat and the front, even from other soldiers. She studied the greats of her time and their ancestors, teachings of bard-philosophers from the early Reconstruction era, the pacifistic philosophical teachings of poets like Adan Goldpage, Mithara Hallows, and Styvanus Forgewright. Kasara believed—needed to believe—that there was more to resolving the conflict between the humans and erahthi than just military might.

While Kasara pursued her education in a mobile Hierarchy military academy aboard the H.A.V. *Siren's Song*, both her parents died within a year of one-another in separate conflicts across the Gulf between the Amrita Asteroid Belt and the erahthi homeworld of Kir-Sharaat. The loss of her parents crushed Kasara. She would become the sole survivor of the Warder bloodline that had stretched back a millennia, and feared her family line would be snuffed out like so many others during the Century War. When her

training was completed, Kasara was assigned to the aetheric battleship the H.A.V. *Dream of Twilight* as a private. The *Dream of Twilight* was soon to join a vanguard force of newly crafted phalanx automatons in a battle around the Kir-Sharaat moon of Orthaun in a conflict that would be historically remembered as the Battle of Thorns.

Aetheric Warships like the H.A.V. *Dream of Twilight* were too large and well-armed for the erahtli to defeat in head-to-head combat with their comparatively fragile organic ships. Instead, the erahtli developed an unconventional means to combat human battleships, developing organic boarding pods that could lie in wait like mines in the Gulf between worlds and moons, then attach to approaching vessels like burrs in so much tall grass. These boarding pods—highly evolved symbiont plant creatures capable of both living in the airless vacuum of the void and harboring a single erahtli pilot—could secrete a highly corrosive acid on command that would dissolve large portions of a battleship's hull. The pods would then detach and cause a forced decompression of the compromised compartments, ejecting unprotected crew into the void. The boarding vessels could then would reattach and send their erahtli pilots out in environmentally-sealed symbiont suits to clean up the survivors and commandeer the ship for research. En-route to join the phalanx at Orthaun the erahtli landed boarding pods on the hull of the H.A.V. *Dream of Twilight*, and so on her first tour of duty Kasara was forced to face one of these harrowing attacks.

During the initial explosive decompression, the ship's captain was jettisoned into the void and the morale of the surviving crew collapsed almost immediately. Kasara saw opportunity in spite of the tragedy around her and rose to the challenge faced by her crew. Kasara rallied the remaining soldiers aboard the *Dream of Twilight* and enacted a last stand in the center of the ship in a broadcast hub. On Hierarchy battleships, a broadcast hub allows a single bard to transmit music across nearby aetherships to increase fighting capability and morale. For Kasara, the

broadcast hub became a beacon in the dark. Kasara and the handful of survivors held that broadcast room, with its farcasters engaged and their cries mixed with the sound of their last stand transmitted out into the emptiness of the void for anyone who would listen.

Kasara and the other survivors held that broadcast station for six hours against the boarders before they could fight no more and were finally overwhelmed by the erahtli forces. The survivors, Kasara included, were rounded up to be transported back to Kir-Sharaat as prisoners. But, little did the erahtli know, in spite of their apparent victory it was Kasara that had won the battle. The losses suffered by the erahtli had left them effectively crippled. When a small team of phalanx soldiers who heard Kasara's broadcast broke away from the vanguard and arrived to check on the *Dream of Twilight* the erahtli were in no condition to fight them off. The arrival of the phalanx sent panic through the erahtli force, and served as distraction enough for Kasara to slip out of the bonds of her erahtli captors and fight anew to save her comrades' lives. Unarmed and outnumbered, Kasara fought with whatever she could get her hands on until the phalanx team arrived, joining Kasara in the fight to finish off the remaining erahtli.

For her actions at the Battle of Thorns, Kasara Warder was awarded the Hierarchy Commendation of Heroism, reinstating her family line into the Council of Nobles in Central. Kasara additionally received promotion to the position of First Officer of the *Dream of Twilight*, where she served for seven more years. Kasara, aboard the *Dream of Twilight*, was present for the final hours of the Century War and participated in the peace talks that would come, forming the tenuous truce between the erahtli and humans that holds to present day.

Since the end of the Century War, Kasara has retired from her position aboard the *Dream of Twilight* to work as a Protectorate liaison to Hierarchy in settlements like Vigilance in Kir-Sharaat's orbit, and Wighthaven on Orbis-Aurea. When not following direct Hierarchy orders, Kasara moonlights as a

freelancer, using unsanctioned operations to gather intelligence on taur movements beyond Hierarchy-controlled space. These missions take Kasara further and further away from not only Hierarchy-controlled space, but also Hierarchy-controlled ideas, and she returns to Akasaat just a little different each time.

FIGHTER ARCHETYPE

The below archetype first appeared in the *Aethera Campaign Setting*.

Aether Soldier

The first aether soldiers were born of the early days of the Paragon Project, seeking to imbue human soldiers with superhuman ability. While these initial experiments did not produce the desired results, adjustments to the alchemical aetherite infusion process created a new breed of magically-attuned warrior. Over the course of the Century War, other races have adopted the tradition, be it through personal augmentation (in the case of phalanx), or the spiritual empowerment of the okanta directly infusing themselves with the frozen essence of ley lines. Aether soldiers possess singularly unique ability to manipulate and enhance their armaments with supernatural power.

Aetherite Familiarity: An aether soldier's intense training and long term handling of aetherite makes them well acquainted with the material's inner working, and with other materials producing similar effects. At 1st level, an aether soldier adds Knowledge (arcana) to his list of class skills and removes Knowledge (dungeoneering) and Handle Animal. In addition, he gains a +2 insight bonus on all Knowledge (arcana) checks involving aetherite.

Aether Bond (Su): At 1st level, an aether soldier gains a free masterwork melee weapon crafted from refined aetherite. This functions as a wizard's arcane bond with a weaponCRB. This replaces the bonus feat gained at 1st level.

Arcane Strike: At 2nd level, an aether soldier gains Arcane Strike as a bonus feat even if he does not meet the prerequisites, using his fighter levels as his effective caster level. An aether soldier may only use Arcane

Strike with natural attacks, unarmed strikes, or his aether bond weapon. This ability replaces the bonus feat gained at 2nd level.

Indomitable Will (Ex): At 2nd level, an aether soldier gains a +1 morale bonus to all Will saves to resist charm and compulsion effects. This bonus increases by 1 at 6th level and every four levels thereafter to a maximum of +5 at 18th level. This ability replaces bravery.

Arcane Resilience (Su): At 3rd level, whenever an aether soldier gains armor training, he may instead choose to gain a cumulative +1 bonus on all saves against spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects rather than the benefits of armor training. This ability modifies armor training.

Arcane Augmentation (Su): At 5th level, whenever the aether soldier uses Arcane Strike he may sacrifice some of the damage bonus provided by the feat to grant his aether bond weapon magic weapon enhancements with equal value to the amount of damage bonus sacrificed. He may grant the following special abilities: ghost touch at 5th level, vicious at 9th level, limning^{UE} at 13th level, and nullifying^{UE} at 17th level. This ability replaces all levels of weapon training.

Shield Against Magic (Su): At 19th level, an aether soldier gains spell resistance equal to 11 + his level. This spell resistance is always in effect and an aether soldier must spend a move action to willingly lower it. This ability replaces armor mastery.

Aether Weapon Master (Ex): At 20th level, an aether soldier gains the fighter's weapon mastery ability, but this ability only functions with the aether soldier's aether bond weapon. This ability modifies weapon mastery.

OEMATHRA-KOTH was born thirty-two years before the arrival of humans to Kir-Sharaat and the start of the Century War. Oemathra, like all erahthi, grew from a colossal Heartwood tree, suspended in a translucent pod of plant flesh, subconsciously connected to all other unborn erahthi across the entirety of Kir-Sharaat. They were named by Aenji-Shan, a scientist and researcher of symbiotic life forms from the House of Alchemy. Aenji named Oemathra after an erahthi hero-poet six centuries dead whose lyrical art enraptured Aenji as a youth. As a child of the Heartwood tree Kothametk, Oemathra took a portion of the Heartwood's name as their "family" name. From a young age Oemathra was trained in the art of alchemy and symbiont development for the biological sciences arm of the Idea Maker caste. Aenji served as Oemathra's mentor, guiding the young erahthi into the study of physical sciences, specifically chemical manipulation and alchemy, as divinations indicated Oemathra would excel in those fields. At the same time, Aenji offered Oemathra room to explore and grow creatively, offering instruction when possible and recommendations for supplemental teachers when Oemathra's curiosity reached out to areas beyond Aenji's expertise. The praise and adulation afforded to by Aenji was a positive reinforcement to the young erahthi, emboldening a desire for understanding and innovation.

Oemathra served as Aenji's understudy for twenty-six years before taking a prestigious position among the House of Alchemy—the Atkrisanya—where there was increased freedom to explore other schools of learning alongside performance of required societal functions. As a member of the House of Alchemy, Oemathra researched medicine, botany, agriculture, and their intersections with chemical sciences and



OEMATHRA

ERATHI ALCHEMIST 1

OEMATHTRA

Agender Erahthi alchemist^{APG} 1

LN Medium outsider (erahthi, native)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 11 (1d8+3)

Fort +4, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2; +4 racial bonus vs. mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, and stun effects

Defensive Ability wood-infused; **Immune** sleep;

Weakness –2 penalty on all saves to resist inhaled fumes, poisons, smoke, or other such effects

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee shortspear +0 (1d6)

Ranged bomb +3 (1d6+3 Fire)

Special Attacks bomb 6/day (1d6+3 fire, DC 13)

Alchemist Extracts Prepared (CL 1st; concentration +4)

1st—*cure light wounds*, *illusion of calm*^{UC} (DC 14)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st; concentration +1)

1/day—*Speak with plants*

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 17, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +0; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 12

Feats *Brew Potion*, *Extra Bombs*^{APG}, *Throw Anything*

Skills Craft (alchemy) +7 (+8 to create alchemical items), Diplomacy +1, Fly +4, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (nature) +7, Perception +6, Spellcraft +7; +4 racial bonus to Stealth in forest terrain.

Languages Aklo, Custom Language, Custom Language, Custom Language, Sylvan

SQ alchemy (alchemy crafting +1), dermal breathing, mutagen (+4/–2, +2 natural armor, 10 minutes), wood infused, woodland passage

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of shield of faith* +2, alchemist's fire (2); **Other Gear** formula book (prepared extracts plus *bomber's eye*^{APG}, *expeditious retreat*, and *true strike*), shortspear, web-fiber armor^{ACS}, *aetheric capacitor*^{ACS} (6 au)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Dermal Breathing (Ex) Oemathra breathes through their skin. As such any exposed portion of their body can be used to breathe, such as keeping one hand above water to avoid drowning. However their leaves Oemathra susceptible to inhaled toxins and he suffers a –2 penalty on all saves to resist inhaled fumes, poisons, smoke, or other such effects.

Mutagen (Su) Oemathra can create a mutagen that he can imbibe in order to heighten their physical prowess at the cost of their personality. It takes 1 hour to brew a dose of mutagen, and once brewed, it remains potent until used. Oemathra can only maintain one dose of mutagen at a time—if he brews a second dose, any existing mutagen becomes inert. As with an extract or bomb, a mutagen that is not in Oemathra's possession becomes inert until Oemathra picks it up again.

When Oemathra brews a mutagen, he selects one physical ability score—either Strength, Dexterity,

alchemical art, all while performing lab work that produced poultices, balms and other medicinal alchemy supplies.

Twenty-nine years after joining the Atkrisanya, Oemathra earned a personal stay of responsibility to pursue private study, during which time Oemathra journeyed beyond the safety of civilization, walking the road-branches and delving down into the lightless depths bordering the forbidden realm of the Darkwild, to catalogue native flora and fauna. On one such

journey Oemathra stumbled upon the ruin of a city predating the founding of San-Kaishan, the presumed oldest city on Kir-Sharaat.

In that ruin Oemathra unearthed an ancient magical record-keeping crystal that recorded spoken word for later listening. On the device Oemathra heard the voice of an entity, thousands of years removed from the contemporary age, speaking the erahthi language. Though the entity was never identified by name, it spoke of a war that ravaged

or Constitution. It's a standard action to drink a mutagen. Upon being imbibed, the mutagen causes the alchemist to grow bulkier and more bestial, granting him a +2 natural armor bonus and a +4 alchemical bonus to the selected ability score for 10 minutes.

In addition, while the mutagen is in effect, Oemathra takes a –2 penalty to one of their mental ability scores. If the mutagen enhances their Strength, it applies a penalty to their Intelligence. If it enhances their Dexterity, it applies a penalty to their Wisdom. If it enhances their Constitution, it applies a penalty to their Charisma.

Wood-Infused: For the purposes of effects targeting creatures by type (such as bane weapons or a ranger's favored enemy ability), erahthi count as both native outsiders and plants. Erahthi gain a +4 racial bonus on all saving throws against mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, and stun effects, and are immune to sleep effects.

Woodland Passage (Ex) Oemathra may move through any sort of undergrowth such as natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain at up to their normal speed without taking damage or suffering any other impairment (but not run or charge). Thorns, briars, and overgrown areas that have been magically manipulated to impede motion, however, still affect him.

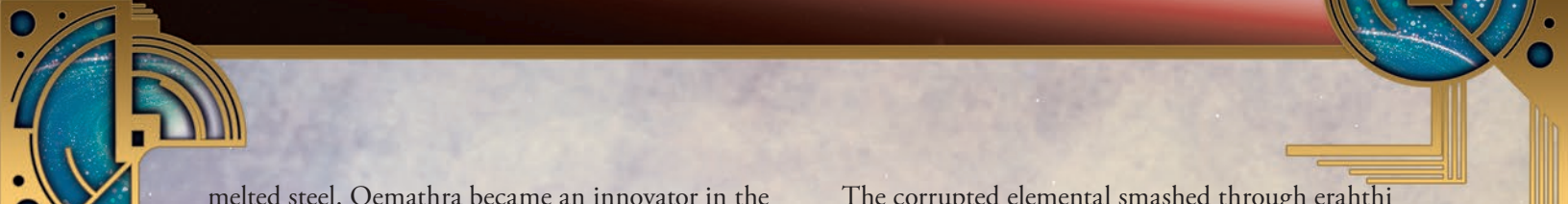
their world. Oemathra immediately thought of the ancient war between the Era-Sharaat and zahajin, though nothing on the recording could confirm this suspicion. While little conclusive information was contained on that stone to pinpoint an exact time, Oemathra was quick to return home to Kir-Kothametek to share this information, though they were convinced yet more soundstones remained to be discovered in the Darkwild. Upon returning to the Atkrisanya, Oemathra was confronted by agents of

the Council of Song, direct servants of the Tritarch, who were already aware of Oemathra's discovery. These enigmatic operators of divine will demanded the soundstone be handed over, and the word of these servants was a direct extension of the Tritarch's supreme law.

Oemathra did not question this demand, did not for a moment question the will of the Tritarch, for the erahthi had long benefitted from the protection and guidance of the Tritarch, accepting that their ancient minds saw further and deeper into the causality of the world than the erahthi ever could. With that simple understanding, Oemathra handed over the only physical evidence of the erahthi's ancient history. The agents of the Tritarch thanked Oemathra for their noble service and sacrifice, then departed without another word.

The years following this loss were particularly difficult for Oemathra. Working in the Atkrisanya became drudgery. In spite of offers for Oemathra to work with other clans and institutes of research there was no personal will. Everything Oemathra had once loved felt blunted, disinteresting. Brilliant as Oemathra was, the passion that fueled expeditions into the fringes of the Darkwild no longer existed when it came to biological sciences. Oemathra could only contemplate personal losses for so long, however, before choices were made in absentia.

The arrival of humanity to San-Kaishan and their abrupt and violent departure ignited a war that would burn for a hundred years as one act of aggression led to yet more violence in reprisal, and soon the erahthi and humans forgot who struck the first blow; the war became a history of retribution. As a member of the Atkrisanya, Oemathra was forced into developing biological weapons to employ against the humans and their spacefaring vessels. Terrible alchemical weapons came out of the union of the Atkrisanya's resources and Oemathra's creative genius: poison gas that caused mass asphyxiation, symbionts that bored into the nervous system and could puppeteer a living creature, plants that secreted acid so potent it



melted steel. Oemathra became an innovator in the field of murder and this horror weighed heavily on their conscience. Every day stories passed through the districts of Kir-Sharaat that erahthi were dying by the hundreds, sometimes it was the thousands. Symbiont ships were born to take the erahthi to the stars to meet the human threat head on. The dream of space exploration was born out of violence and bloodshed. This loss of erahthi life became justification for coming atrocities that would shame generations.

Thirty-nine years into what would become known as the Century War, Oemathra was a first-hand witness to the gruesome Battle of Kothametk. Two-dozen human aetherships dropped out of atmosphere on the far side of Kir-Sharaat and flew through the Darkwild for thousands of miles, slipping past sentry stations and fortified borders, eventually emerging from beneath Kir-Kothametk undetected. The attack happened swiftly, with the human vessels releasing devastating aether-powered plasma weaponry on a settlement as much designed for weapons research as it was medicine and life-sciences.

During the attack, Oemathra did not fight directly, but instead maintained a medical triage center outside of the area of conflict. Toward the end of the attack, the erahthi deployed a weapon—one Oemathra helped design—known as the Living Scourge; a plant symbiont fused with a corrupted elemental of bone that fed on aetherite to increase its power. The scourge attacked the human ships, consumed their aetherdrives, and proceeded to liquefy the bones of the vessels' human pilots with its corrupted elemental powers. The tortured screams of those afflicted by the Living Scourge echoed with the cries of the erahthi in a horrifying symphony.

Though the Living Scourge was successful at neutralizing the human invaders, it was never intended to be deployed in such a fashion, let alone bond the symbiont to something as dangerous as a bone elemental to increase its power. The Living Scourge broke free of the erahthi sorcerers commanding it and turned on its creators in mindless bloodlust.

The corrupted elemental smashed through erahthi defensive blockades, ravaged Oemathra's hospital, and left Oemathra for dead beneath a pile of rubble and corpses. Ultimately, reinforcements from neighboring districts were able to destroy the Living Scourge, but the damage done was nearly as horrific as what the humans had wrought.

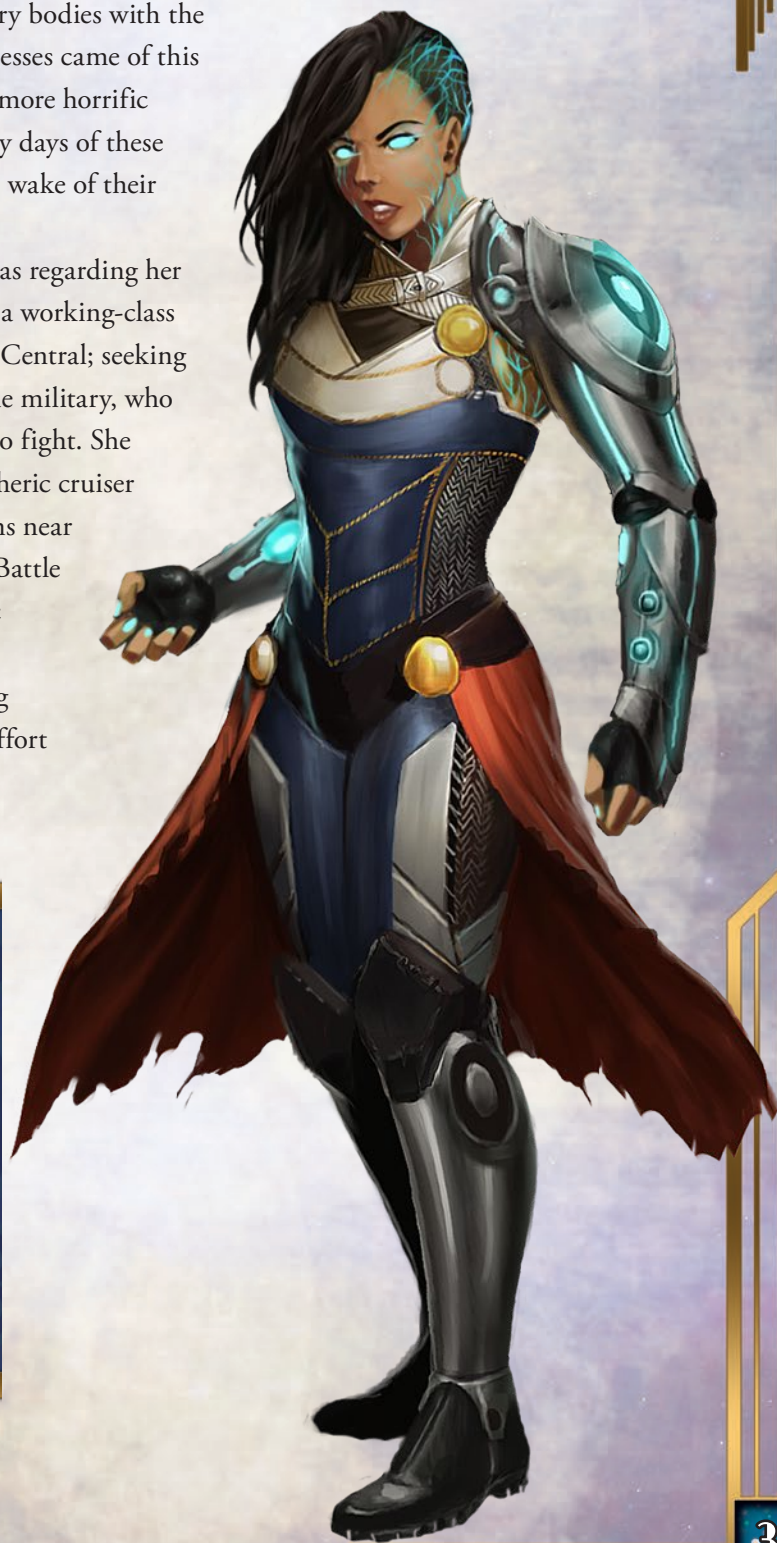
Oemathra barely survived the Battle of Kothametk and was transported to the capital district San-Kaishan for long-term care. Shaken to their core by that violence, Oemathra refused to further assist with military development of biological weapons. The remainder of Oemathra's exposure to the war was through daily updates delivered to their recovery room by scribes. Even after making a full recovery, Oemathra had withdrawn from society and the war, listening to long-delayed accounts of humans and erahthi destroying one another. Oemathra would hear of the horrors wrought by humanity's own alchemical research that created first the living weapons known as Paragons, then later the infused. Oemathra would hear of the first phalanx deployment by the humans and hear how terrifyingly effective these construct-soldiers were on the field of battle. Oemathra would watch centuries of knowledge turned into a sword that both civilizations were ever so eager to throw themselves on.

On the day that the war ended, when the armies of the taur emerged through the gate hub and stole one of Kir-Sharaat's moons, Oemathra was among a few erahthi who saw this "defeat" as an opportunity for victory; not a military or political victory, but a societal victory.

Oemathra's testimony at the first peace talks between human and erahthi representatives would serve as the road map to the exchange of ideas and unite against the looming threat of the taur. These decisions were not made easily or quickly, they were not made without the threat of the whole peace crumbling back down into the fire of war at nearly every step of the way. But, for the first time in a verylong time, Oemathra found passion again.

The crucible of war begets many horrors, and the Century War was the worst conflict yet known to the current societies that inhabit the Aethera system. In humanity's desperation to augment their military forces in the war against the erahthi of Kir-Sharaat, the scientists and sorcerers of the Hierarchy turned to experimentation upon their own people. The goal was to create living weapons that could turn the tide of the war in humanity's favor against the implacable threat the erahthi represented. Soldiers suffering from terminal aetherite poisoning were brought to off-world labs—volunteers, in theory—and subjected to torturous procedures and experiments to infuse their very bodies with the power of refined aetherite. While a handful of true successes came of this project, the titanic warriors known as the Paragons, far more horrific monstrosities were created. Those who survived the early days of these experiments, prior to the rise of the Paragons and in the wake of their exile, became the people now known as the infused.

According to the official documents that SURESTRA has regarding her past service in the Hierarchy's military, she was born to a working-class family on the ground tier of the human arcology called Central; seeking a way to escape that lowly station, she signed up with the military, who by that stage in the war were accepting anyone willing to fight. She served with no real distinction as a private upon the aetheric cruiser Indomitable Spirit defending aetherite mining operations near Seraos. During a small skirmish that is recorded as the Battle of Aegis IV, the Indomitable Spirit suffered catastrophic damage to its aetherdrive, leaving the cruiser a floating hulk in orbit of the world while simultaneously exposing the crew to lethal levels of aetheric radiation. A rescue effort



SURESTRA
INFUSED BRAWLER
(TITAN) 1

SURESTRA

Female Infused^{ACS} brawler^{ACG} (titan) 1

LN Medium humanoid (aether, human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 12 (1d10+2)

Fort +3, **Ref** +4, **Will** +0

Immune aetherite radiation

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor)

Melee unarmed strike +5 (1d6+3) or brawler's flurry +3/+3 (1d6+3),

Ranged combat shotgun +4 touch (1d6) or combat shotgun semi-automatic fire +2/+2 touch (1d6)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st; concentration +3)

At will—[mage hand](#), [open/close](#)

1/day—[shield](#)

Special Attack grit (1)

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 16

Feats [Arcane Strike](#)^B, [Improved Unarmed Strike](#)^B, Unholstering Strike

Skills Acrobatics +6, Diplomacy +2, Intimidate +3, Perception +5, Sense Motive +4

Languages Hymnas

SQ brawler's cunning, martial training, psychic bond (DC 13; 5 bonds), telekinetic guidance (15 ft.),

Combat Gear [potion of cure light wounds](#); **Other Gear** combat shotgun (24 bullets), trooper armor^{ACS}, [aetheric capacitor](#)^{ACS} (12 au)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Deeds: Surestra can spend grit points to accomplish deeds. Surestra has access to the following deeds and gains 1 point of grit back every time she scores a critical hit with a firearm or lands a killing blow with a firearm.

Unstoppable (Ex): When Surestra succeeds at a Fortitude saving throw against an effect that deals damage on a successful save, she can spend 1 grit point as an immediate action to instead take no damage for that effect.

Hail of Bullets (Ex): When Surestra makes a brawler's flurry she can exchange one melee attack for a ranged attack with a firearm. Such ranged attacks suffer the normal attack penalty of brawler's flurry. Surestra can exchange a maximum of 3 melee attacks for firearm attacks per day.

Psychic Bond (Su): Surestra can forge a psychic bond with another creature that has the aether subtype. Creating this bond requires both creatures remain in physical contact for 1 minute. An unwilling target of psychic bond may negate the effect with a successful Will save (DC 11). After a successful bond, both creatures gain a +4 racial bonus on Sense Motive checks made against one another and a +4 racial bonus on Bluff checks made to pass secret messages. Once per day, Surestra can share thoughts with one or more creatures she is psychically bonded with as though they are all under the effect of [mindlink](#)^{OA}. Surestra can be bonded with a maximum of 5 creatures at once.

Telekinetic Guidance (Su): When in zero gravity (or affected by [levitate](#)) Surestra gains a fly speed equal to half her base speed.

after the battle managed to retrieve Surestra and a score of other soldiers from the ship, all of whom were suffering from terminal levels of aetherite poisoning.

These documents are all that Surestra has to go by, because she no longer remembers anything before the laboratories; the days-long agony of aetherite burning

through her blood are her first memories, the knives of sorcerer-surgeons carving binding sigils into her flesh and bones to contain the power, channeling nodes implanted in her muscles to carry that power through her, suffocating time spent suspended in vats of alchemical reagents. This was her birth. Surestra

took her first steps as one of the infused, her body overflowing with aetherite in a way that transformed it from a poison to a power she could wield.

According to records, she was the only survivor of the Indomitable Spirit to exit the infusion procedure intact.

Somewhere along the way, everything that she was, who she was, faded away; a side-effect of the inhuman experiments performed upon her that was predicted, but never predictable. Pre-surgery memory-loss among the infused was common, but the extent to which this memory loss manifests varied from patient to patient. In later days a more cynical Surestra would come to wonder if it was a desired result rather than a happy accident, to make the new-born infused more easily indoctrinated and controlled.

Confused and unsteady, Surestra was swiftly educated as to the ongoing war and her place in it. As soon as she was judged sufficiently mentally stable, she was immediately placed into a unit with three others who had survived the infusion process. The moment she laid eyes upon her new comrades-in-arms, she felt a draw towards them, a flicker of psychic recognition not of who they were—but of what they were, akin to her.

Over the rigorous training to come, they would become close to one another; at first out of fear and confusion, all but one of the others having lost their memory as well, and later out of mutual bonding through training and forced closeness. They were trained as living weapons, and while the others of her team were trained in firearms or sorcerous assault, Surestra was taught to kill with nothing more than her bare hands and the innate powers awakened within her by the infusion process. Surestra swiftly rose to become the most dominant personality in the team and was officially designated team leader. What few non-infused could understand, however, was how closely in-tune the team was with one another—'team leader' was a formality for the sake of the military hierarchy. Their camaraderie took on a new level as they bonded on a psychic level, and

while it was at first frightening to share one another's dreams and anticipate one another's movements and thoughts, in time they worked through that fear and came together closer than ever. Fireteam Archon became a substitute family for Surestra—an anchor to hold onto, to trust, and to believe in without any memories to support her. Over the years of battle that followed, they would become her lovers as well, the four of them sharing alike without jealousy or concern of misunderstanding. The bond between infused transcended understanding by most outsiders.

The war was at its most brutal at that time, with the erahthi carrying out suicide attacks against cities on Akasaat, and as soon as Fireteam Archon was deemed ready for combat they were immediately deployed to the front lines. The next few years are a blur of blood and battle in Surestra's memory, as they faced off against the worst that the erahthi had to offer. After surviving their first few missions without any casualties, Archon was designated an elite commando unit and given even more dangerous assignments.

At first, Surestra and her team took pride in the missions that she and her team were assigned—hazardous missions with little back-up or contingency plan in case of failure. As time passed, though, and the infused shared what they had experienced with one another, they came to realize that they were simply considered expendable by the Hierarchy command. Inquiries about promotion paths were politely side-stepped, and more than one member of the team had noticed the disgust and horror in the way that non-infused looked at them with when they didn't think they were being observed. Discontent began to stir as Fireteam Archon realized that they only ones they could truly count on for support were themselves, and occasionally other infused squads that they were assigned to work with.

In time, that cynicism may have grown into insubordination, but the war ended with an abruptness that prevented that from occurring. Archon were fighting a boarding action over Kir-Sharaat when the Gate Hub flared to life. It was

the moment when the taur poured forth like locusts to assault both human and erahthi vessels without discrimination. The infused and their enemies both paused mid-battle in shock as they realized what was occurring, and after several tense minutes—both sides wordlessly withdrew in order to turn their attention to this new threat. By the end of the battle, the taur had been driven off into space by the combined forces of two worlds, but not before they claimed the moon Thycalse as a trophy. It was the end of the war, although true peace would not be declared until the accords were established in the aftermath.

What place did the Hierarchy have for their ghoulish creations without a war to be fought, though? It was a question that Surestra had never allowed herself to consider, as even her parents had never known a world without that war. Archon was in mourning having lost one of its own, the sorceress Iona, in the final battle. It was a loss they felt all the keener having relied for so long on the psychic bond between the team. None of them wished to continue serving the Hierarchy military, and so the remaining three were discharged at their request following procedures put into place after the signing of the accords.

While the phalanx were specifically granted citizenship after the war the infused were being swept beneath the rug. Those who signed up for the new 'Slot Process' being put into effect ended up in menial roles scrubbing aether filters in processing factories or working in off-world mines, while those who refused but remained within the cities of Akasaat were looked down upon and often harassed by the authorities as potential dissidents. With her team—her family—broken apart by their loss and the end of the war, Surestra consulted what records were available and sought out the blood family that she didn't remember. She was met with horror and denial that they were her family, and could see the disgust in their eyes as they saw what their daughter had become. She turned her back on the frailty of blood and walked away from everything.

Adrift, but unwilling to surrender her destiny to the Hierarchy, Surestra fell into depression and drink. She had no purpose and was alone in the world. Even her 'creators' wanted her and her kind to simply disappear. It wasn't until she heard a radio broadcast about Orbit Aurea and the Paragons that now ruled that world that she was dragged from the darkness that might otherwise have consumed her. A world under the reign of those created by the same experiments that changed her kind into what they were—perhaps there, she might find a new life.

The remaining stipend from her military days was spent to gain passage on a ship heading to the colony of Wighthaven, then to sign on to serve with Paragon Lietka and start over. Here, perhaps, she might find a way to make her existence matter.

To burn bright against the night before it fell once and for all.

NEW FEAT

Unholstering Strike

You have learned a close-quarters fighting style that allows you to draw a firearm after striking an opponent in melee.

Prerequisite: Str 12+, grit class feature, base attack bonus +1

Benefit: When you successfully hit an opponent in melee combat you may draw a holstered firearm as an immediate action. You must have enough free hands to appropriately wield this firearm in order to draw it. If you have additional attacks you may make in the round, you may attack with your drawn firearm.

Additionally, when you successfully use Unholstering Strike and then attack with your newly drawn firearm on the same round you may spend 1 point of grit in order for that ranged attack to not provoke attacks of opportunity from the creature you just hit in melee.

TILLANNIEH was born during The Century War. She was a child of war, a scion of a century of bloodshed and strife born of alien aggression and home-grown zealotry. Tillannieh, like all her kind, was born from the fruit of one of the planet's many Heartwood trees after a long gestation period and a battery of magical assessments that would determine her name, her social caste, and the trajectory of her short, tragic life.

The Heartwood tree from which Tillannieh sprouted had deep roots in one of the areas ravaged hardest by the conflict between her people and the humans of Akasaat. As any reputable erahthi biomancer will tell you, all organic material is susceptible to disease, and the Heartwoods are no exception. Radical experimentation with plant symbionts by erahthi working under the oversight of Kir-Sharaat's Chamber of War had caused Tillannieh's Heartwood to wither and its fruit to rot on the vine, and although erahthi Problem Solvers recommended that the tree be quarantined to prevent further spread of the disease, it was ultimately decided that furthering the war effort outweighed the associated risk.

Athrakarus needed more bodies; Tillannieh's, it turned out, was exceptional, even if her build was stunted and more fragile than the average erahthi. An early divination performed by an erahthi medium determined that for what she lacked in physical prowess she would make up for with magical talent. Tillannieh was named after an ancient,



TILLANNIEH
ERATHI
HYDROKINETICIST 1

TILLANNIEH

Female Erahthi^{ACS} hydrokineticist^{OA} 1

CN Medium outsider (erahthi, native)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 24 (2d8+8)

Fort +6, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2; +4 racial bonus vs. mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, and stun effects

Defensive Ability wood-infused; **Immune** sleep;

Weakness: -2 penalty on all saves to resist inhaled fumes, poisons, smoke, or other such effects.

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Ranged water blast +4 (1d6+4)

Special Attacks kinetic blast

Kineticist Wild Talents Known

Infusions—pushing infusion

Blasts—water blast (1d6+4)

Utility—basic hydrokinesis

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st; concentration +3)

1/day—*Speak with plants*

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 16, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +0; **CMB** -1; **CMD** 12

Feats *Point-Blank Shot*

Skills Acrobatics +6, Heal +6, Knowledge (nature) +4, Perception +6; +4 racial bonus to Stealth in forest terrain.

Languages Erahthi, Hymnas

SQ burn (1 point/round, max 6), dermal breathing, gather power, wood-infused, woodland passage

Other Gear web-fiber armor^{ACS}, *standard aetheric capacitor*^{ACS} (45 au)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Basic Hydrokinesis (Su) Tillannieh can create water as the cantrip create water, purify water as if using purify food and drink, and dry wet creatures and objects as if using prestidigitation. While she cannot lift water into the air using this ability, she can create mild currents in a body of water by concentrating. These currents are strong enough to run a water mill as if the mill were being turned manually by

a creature with a Strength score equal to her Constitution score.

Burn 1/round (1 nonlethal/burn, 6/day) Tillannieh can overexert herself to channel more power than normal, pushing past the limit of what is safe for her body by accepting burn. Some of her wild talents allow her to accept burn in exchange for a greater effect, while others require her to accept a certain amount of burn to use that talent at all. For each point of burn she accepts, Tillannieh takes 1 point of nonlethal damage per character level. This damage can't be healed by any means other than getting a full night's rest, which removes all burn and associated nonlethal damage. Nonlethal damage from burn can't be reduced or redirected. Tillannieh can accept only 1 point of burn per round. Tillannieh can't choose to accept burn if it would put her total number of points of burn higher than 3 + her Constitution modifier (though she can be forced to accept more burn from a source outside her control). Tillannieh who has accepted burn never benefits from abilities that allow her to ignore or alter the effects she receives from nonlethal damage.

Dermal Breathing: Tillannieh breathes through her skin. As such any exposed portion of her body can be used to breathe, such as keeping one hand above water to avoid drowning. However this leaves Tillannieh susceptible to inhaled toxins and they suffer a -2 penalty on all saves to resist inhaled fumes, poisons, smoke, or other such effects.

Gather Power (Su) If she has both hands free, Tillannieh can gather energy or elemental matter as a move action. Gathering power creates an extremely loud, visible display in a 20-foot radius centered on Tillannieh, as the energy or matter swirls around her. Gathering power in this way allows Tillannieh to reduce the total burn cost of a blast wild talent she uses in the same round by 1 point. Tillannieh can instead gather power for 1 full round in order to reduce the total burn cost of a blast wild talent used on her next turn by 2 points (to a minimum of 0 points). If she does so, she can also gather power as a move action during her next turn to reduce the burn cost by a total of 3 points. If Tillannieh takes damage during or after gathering power and before using the kinetic blast that releases it, she must succeed at a

concentration check (DC = 10 + damage taken + effective spell level of her kinetic blast) or lose the energy in a wild surge that forces her to accept a number of points of burn equal to the number of points by which her gathered power would have reduced the burn cost. This ability can never reduce the burn cost of a wild talent below 0 points.

Pushing Infusion (Burn 1) The momentum of Tillannieh's kinetic blast knocks foes back. Tillannieh may attempt a bull rush combat maneuver check against each target damaged by her infused blast, using her Constitution modifier instead of her Strength modifier to determine the bonus. This infusion can push a foe back by a maximum of 5 feet. She can increase the burn cost of this infusion to increase the maximum distance pushed by 5 feet per additional point of burn accepted.

Wood-Infused: For the purposes of effects targeting creatures by type (such as bane weapons or a ranger's favored enemy ability), Tillannieh counts as both native outsider and plant.

Woodland Passage (Ex) Tillannieh may move through any sort of undergrowth such as natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain at up to her normal speed without taking damage or suffering any other impairment (but not run or charge). Thorns, briars, and overgrown areas that have been magically manipulated to impede motion, however, still affect her.

turbulent river that ran through the Darkwild far beneath even the lowest branches of Kir-Sharaat in the hope that the young kineticist with an affinity for water and ice would wield the same sort of raw natural power as her namesake.

She did not, and her caretakers with the Chamber of War second-guessed their decision to train her as one of the erahthi's child soldiers in spite of her gift and her Seeker caste. Tillannieh could draw moisture

out of the air and form dewdrops on the tips of her long fingers. Fog unfurled in thick, smoky plumes where she stepped. On cold days, she created elaborate geometric shapes made from frost that captured both the light and the quiet admiration of those closest to her, even if Athrakarus had no use for such trivial things. A heated debate over how best to implement Tillannieh's limited skills ignited passions on both sides at the Chamber of War. Erahthi leaders fell into two camps: those who thought it best to continue her training, and those who did not see room for improvement and recommended that she be shipped off to the front lines with the other child soldiers so precious resources could be allocated elsewhere.

Tillannieh was a sensitive child, prone to daydreaming and stargazing, with little interest in much outside of the imaginary world she had constructed for herself as a coping mechanism to distract her from the conflict escalating around her. Those opposed to continuing her training argued that she was too weak and soft to be an effective soldier while those who wished to see her live argued that she'd rise to the occasion when the appropriate time came, urging patience. Eventually, a compromise was reached, and the Council of War decided to put Tillannieh to the test. Her handlers scoured the prisons of Kir-Sharaat and, after much consideration, selected an older okanta warrior that they'd captured during a boarding attack on a Hierarchy vessel. Although weary, the okanta warrior was also battle-hardened and did not pass up the opportunity to avenge his slain clanspeople when Tillannieh's handlers presented it to him. He would fight one of their own soldiers, they said. And if he won, they would give him his freedom.

He did not expect his combatant to be little more than a child, but ignored the compassionate rumblings in his chest, and brought his axe down on Tillannieh's head, praying he might bestow her a quick and honorable death. He did not, but the spirits must have been listening because this was Tillannieh's gift to him; the warrior's axe froze inches from the little

erahthi's face and consumed his attached arm in ice. Tillannieh's magic spread swiftly through his body turning solid the blood in his veins and stopping his heart before he could even comprehend what was happening.

Her handlers applauded. Tillannieh wept. Although she had earned her namesake at last, it came at a high cost. As the years passed and her training intensified, Tillannieh hardened her own heart and learned how to suppress her emotions in order to protect herself from the horrors she was instructed to inflict on her people's enemies. Tillannieh's slight frame and birth-caste, combined with her skill set, made her an ideal assassin for the Chamber of War. Humans and okana alike still tell stories of swift, wintry death that swept into their encampments in the form of a silver fog that, when lifted, left frozen tableaus where small armies once stood. The only positive thing Tillannieh would ever say about her work was that every corpse she created was a piece of art.

Tillannieh was chosen to participate in a clandestine assault beyond the Nethersphere of Orbis Aurea, something her people had never before attempted. She and her team were dropped from orbit in symbiont escape pods capable of surviving passage through the Nethersphere. Her target, an okanta shaman of great renown, was situated in a settlement just twenty miles east of Wighthaven. Erahthi spies had received reputable intelligence from their operatives in the field that the shaman was being courted by the Hierarchy and asked to join the war effort against Kir-Sharaat. Tillannieh's mission was to lead an attack on the settlement with a team of Reapers and leave no one in the settlement alive in order to send a message to the okanta people about allying themselves with the Hierarchy. Tillannieh did not anticipate what awaited her there; in addition to the shaman and okanta warriors who willingly laid down their lives to protect their leader, there were also squealing children who clutched at their mothers' fur and begged in tiny voices for mercy. Of course the Reapers offered none.

Tillannieh, however, saw reflections of her younger self in the small bodies bleeding larger shapes in the snow, and for the first time in her life made a decision independent of her indoctrination. In the midst of the screams and slaughter, she turned on her own and struck down the erahthi Reapers, shattering their bodies into a fine spray of crystalline shards with a decisive wave of her hand. The surviving okanta people, including the settlement's shaman, rallied around this alien curiosity and, after a fierce but quick debate, welcomed her into their fold. After all, she could not return to Kir-Sharaat, and the shaman declared her actions a divine blessing.

During her time among the okanta people, Tillannieh discovered that her moment of agency had not been a miraculous fluke; it was an integral part of who she was, and she adopted a gender to solidify her new identity as an individual with thoughts and opinions that were contrary to the ones instilled in her from birth. Unfortunately for Tillannieh, fate had one last bad hand to deal her. To the okanta, erahthi lifespan is otherworldly; but to the erahthi, the okanta live for but a season and Tillannieh was helpless to watch as the Century War drew to a close and the children she had saved all died before her. She buried them all herself, carving out great tombs from the frozen earth, then sealing the ground back up again with a heavy, rapidly-chilling heart.

Tillannieh reverted to old habits in order to protect her heart and withdrew from Orbis Aurea, disappearing into a cold, foggy night not unlike the one on which she had first arrived. While she briefly considered returning to Kir-Sharaat to confront those who had once offered her up for slaughter, she decided instead to delay taking vengeance until she was sure she could set foot on her homeworld without being convicted of crimes against her own people. Tillannieh had spent many years on Orbis Aurea, wishing that she had been liberated from service as a child. Now, fully grown and in the prime of her adult life, she at last has the opportunity to save someone else.

Now is time to seize it.

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