

Keystone Episode 0.1 - Kaga

An adventure for a party of four tier 3/5 PCs, for the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*.

It is said that the dying words of the First Ones was that they will yet consume everything. You, your friends and family, the multiverse. This is simply how things are, you must accept it. If this is the case, even the Kaga, man-among-gods and god-among-men will fall to them, though it is what defeated them two millennia ago.

Or did it? As you know, there has been a recent uproar in communities of living machines, "androids" they are called. They say one among them has begun preaching that their creator, the Kaga, seeks the destruction of the world. Was its long ago victory over the First Ones simply a ploy? More likely, one android has simply gone mad.

I understand that is where you come in. I don't care if you believe the androids or the one they call Heretic. I just want to wish you luck. I truly do hope you find it - if you have a moment on your return, I would like to know what he was like. He certainly had to have gotten these unlikely ideas from somewhere.

- Large-Biter

Adventure Background

At the dawn of recorded history, more than two thousand years ago, the humanoid races toiled under the yoke of powerful beings known as the First Ones. Historians have few concrete details about their reign - were they one race or many? Were they were humanoid, or mortal, or do the depictions that survive show only their servants? No clear records remain.

But there is a survivor, in some interpretations of the word. Two thousand years ago, the greatest sages, strategists, scientists, and sorcerers of the age concocted a plan to overthrow their cruel masters. They created the Kaga, the collective sentience of the most brilliant minds of the age. The Kaga became a repository of all human knowledge—and the greatest weapon against the First Ones.

Soon after the Kaga's creation, the enslaved masses of humanity rose up against their overlords. With the Kaga to lead them, the slave races overthrew the First Ones in a series of apocalyptic battles. No record remains of those primeval struggles, nor is there any clue as to the eventual fate of the First Ones. Only the Kaga knows, and it is not talking.

For a long time, the Kaga remained silent on all matters, not even interacting with the world around it as mortalkind rebuilt. Then, for nearly as long it guided the fledgling empires in subtle ways. More recently, it has fully awoken, and begun guiding mortalkind towards a brighter future. But a decade ago, the Kaga took a grand stride in an unexpected direction: it birthed a new race, Androids.

Androids are not native to Exodus. Their predecessors arrived from other worlds by means of the world's many Nexus Gateways, and had long intrigued the Kaga whose single form held multitude of minds. Limited in physical form, the Kaga saw androids as a way to extend its reach across Exodus. Calling upon the aid of the machinesmiths of the Arman Protectorate, a new race was born. The androids proved capable servants, but not the host of bodies the Kaga had been seeking. Then, five years after their initial creation, they were granted a full sentience of their own by rogue machinesmith named Burroughs Drake. In its wisdom, The Kaga accepted this development, allowing his children to live as they chose.

Even more recently, there has been another unlikely development. An android by the name of Second Built has begun claiming that the Kaga's plan for androids included the ultimate subjugation and destruction of all Exodus. Second Built's claims met with immediate opposition, but he was not stopped until long after his message had begun to spread. The seeds of doubt in the teachings of the Kaga had been planted, his long-secret motives had been cast in doubt.

The Kaga's Faithful have organized search parties across Exodus in search of this Heretic. They have sent the message to mercenaries and bounty hunters of all kinds, and particularly the Alliance Freelancers - a professional guild of adventurers working for the Imperial Alliance and the Crown Council.

It was the Freelancers who ultimately tracked the Heretic to the north-western Nas, and the Caneus Empire. And it was the Freelancers who have sent a capable group to take in the Heretic, or put him down. If they're lucky, they may even get some answers out of him, and put an end to these blasphemies.

Adventure Summary

The wilderness of the Caneus Empire is far from forgiving, but the PCs have managed to track the Heretic, Second Built, across the unforgiving, rocky landscape. Here, in the middle of nowhere, the party discovers Second Built has set himself up in an ancient monastery - alone, but not undefended.

Reaching him is only part of the problem - as the party approaches, it becomes clear that the Heretic is communicating with *something*. Whether the party catches the Heretic, and his mysterious ally, by surprise depends on the stealth of their approach - they might even be able to learn who, or what the Heretic is talking to.

When the party does catch the Heretic, Second Built reveals it has received great power in exchange for its doomsaying visions: a Lazarus Brand! Unlike the normal brand, Second Built's brand is interlaid with a glowing silver line, and if the Heretic can be believed, was not bestowed by the Lawmaker, but by his predecessor.

Getting Started

When the party begins this adventure, give them Handout 1. In addition, read or paraphrase the following.

"They call it the Heretic." You were being briefed by Captain Christine Fos, one of the dispatchers for the Alliance Freelancers. She was concerned about the details of the mission, like she always was, her petite face scrunched up in a frown. "The android collective, that is. And the Church of the Kaga. They both want it dead, or at least out of commission for good."

She handed out a sheaf of sketches, each of the same man from a slightly different perspective - an average human male, with unusual crisscrossing tattoos over his face. "He's got some wards, so we've been having trouble tracking him too directly by magic. Which is trouble on its own, but everything we've gathered says he's not much of a fighter. Course, nothing said he would have wards, so be prepared for a surprise. He's about fifty miles north of here, and heading Northwest. You'll have to pick up his trail on your own to catch up to him."

Allow the PCs time to purchase anything they might feel they need for the journey in Nyssa where they begin. Christine has already prepared basic provisions, including maps of the area, a compass, trail rations and basic camping gear appropriate to the cold, wet climate.

Additionally, the PCs might have questions regarding the expedition before setting out. Some of the most likely questions, and the Dispatcher's answers follow:

What did the Heretic do?

"The Heretic has been spreading blasphemies against the Kaga. The biggest and least believable of which is that the Kaga has been plotting the downfall of mankind from the beginning. All you need to worry about is that there's a sizable bounty on his head for it, and that means open season. If you're not fast, someone else will get him first, and the bounty."

What's Northwest of here?

"Pretty much nothing but fjords and the sea. There's a lot of uninhabited land, all of it rocky and rainy. On the bright side, that means there aren't very many monsters, because there's not very much to eat."

What sort of wards?

"We can't tell for certain, but at minimum we can't scry on him directly. Nothing has said he's a spellcaster, so most likely it's a magic item of some sort. But we have no way of knowing what it is or how he got it. If he's carrying something unusual, make sure to pick it up - whatever protection it offers is really useful."

What's an Android?

“The robot-men. I know they’re not everywhere, but we’ve got some here in the Freelancers too. They’re less rare than those pointy-eared elf men. A few years ago, the Kaga made a whole bunch of them, and then a bunch of them gained sentience. Since then, they’ve been spreading like wildfire across Exodus. You may have even met one before, they look just like humans, except they have these lines under their skin that look like tattoos. They just don’t always act that way.”

Something bothering you?

“Of course something’s bothering me. Nobody ever gives us the *whole* story. This Heretic, there’s no way he’s working alone. He’s escaped too many times and has been too hard to track. But nobody knows anything about any allies, or collaborators or... even magic. Just this one android. There’s something missing. Keep an eye on your backs. And if you have a chance to find out who’s aiding him - take it.”

Act 1 - The Wilderness

About two days after their briefing, the PCs reach the Heretic’s last known location: roughly fifty miles North of Nyssa. They’ve crossed outside the ring of farms that surrounds the large city, and are heading into less fertile lands where there wasn’t much but rock, water and the occasional tree.

Fortunately for the PCs, the Heretic is relying entirely on the protective aura of the Mirrored Rod, and not taking any mundane efforts to cover his trail. Still, the surrounding land is rocky and often wet, and it has been several days since the Heretic’s passing. Currently, the heretic has holed up another fifty miles northeast of this location - roughly two more days travel for the PCs.

On the first day, the party must make a **DC 17 Survival check** to follow the Heretic’s trail. A failed check doesn’t mean the party can’t follow the Heretic (they know roughly where he is going, after all), but it means that their travel takes an additional day as the party veers off course and has to backtrack.

Dangers of Nas (EL 4/6)

There isn’t a whole lot living in the rocky bluffs, even only a few days out from a major city like Nyssa. That means what little does live out here has to be extra quick, savage, or subtle to make sure it can catch what prey is nearby. One of the common predators out here is grey ooze, capable of living off the mosses that grow on the rock when it can’t find larger prey.

In the evening of their first day of travel, the PCs are unlucky enough to stumble across one of these oozes as it sits in the middle of a large, bare patch of rock. As the PCs approach, each should roll a **Perception check**. If at least one character’s check is 15 (or 21) or higher, the party recognizes the patch of rock isn’t really a damp rock, but a slime, and can avoid it if they choose. If none of the party scores at least 15 (or 21), then the character with the highest Perception check stumbles into the grey ooze before anyone realizes what it is.

Tier 3

Grey Ooze CR 4 -- 1,200 XP

hp 50 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

Tier 5

Id Ooze CR 6 -- 2,400 XP

N Medium ooze

Init +1; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft.; Perception –3

Defense

AC 7, touch 7, flat-footed 7 (–3 Dex)

hp 62 (4d8+44)

Fort +11, **Ref** –2, **Will** –2

Defensive Abilities ooze traits; **Immune** cold, fire

Offense

Speed 10 ft.

Melee slam +8 (1d6+6 plus 1d6 acid and grab)

Special Attacks acid, constrict (1d6+2 plus 1d6 acid)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th)

At will— [*lesser confusion*](#) (DC 10)

Statistics

Str 20, **Dex** 5, **Con** 30, **Int** 2, **Wis** 5, **Cha** 5

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +8 (+12 grapple); **CMD** 15 (can't be tripped)

Feats Improved Initiative, Toughness

Skills Stealth +1

Languages telepathy 100 ft (id oozes only)

SQ transparent

Special Abilities

Acid (Ex) The digestive acid that covers an id ooze dissolves metals and organic material, but not stone. Each slam and constrict attack deals 1d6 additional acid damage. Armor or clothing worn by a creature grappled by an id ooze takes the same amount of acid damage unless the wearer succeeds on a **DC 22 Reflex saving throw**. A wooden or metal weapon that strikes a gray ooze takes 1d6 acid damage unless the weapon's wielder succeeds on a **DC 22 Reflex save**. The ooze's touch deals 12 points of acid damage per round to wooden or metal objects, but the ooze must remain in contact with the material for 1 full round in order to deal this damage. The save DCs are Constitution-based.

Transparent (Ex) Due to its lack of vivid coloration, an id ooze is difficult to discern from its surroundings in most environments. A **DC 21 Perception check** is required to see a stationary id ooze. Any creature that fails to notice a id ooze and walks into it automatically suffers damage as if struck by the ooze's slam attack and is immediately subject to a grab attempt by the ooze.

On the second day of travel, the party draws closer to the sea, and what little undergrowth there had been entirely disappears, leaving only rocks and lichen. The party must make a **DC 20 Survival check** to follow the Heretic, with a failure costing them two additional days of travel as they lose the trail and have to simply comb the area for any sign of the Heretic, before ultimately discovering the monastery.

The Hillside Monastery

The heretic has picked one of the few structures in the area, a long-abandoned Monastery, to lay low until the heat has died down. Originally built to worship the Kaga, it hasn't seen use in nearly a thousand years, and its roof and many of its walls have crumbled away, leaving only jagged teeth of stone reaching up to the sky.

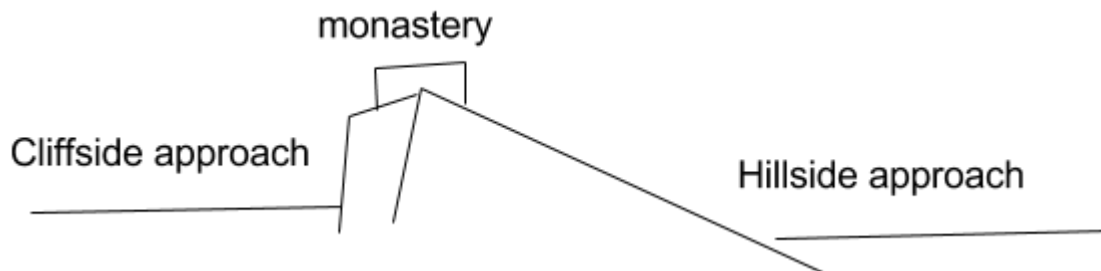
As the PCs approach for the first time, read or paraphrase the following.

You had been tracking the heretic android for days now, across the unforgiving, rocky landscape of Nas. It hasn't always been easy, but neither did it seem like the heretic was attempting to hide his trail. It was almost like he was tempting someone to follow him - to find him.

A thin line of smoke rises from the remains of some building at the top of a cliff ahead, taunting you. The walls were little more than tall piles of stone covered in moss - but where there was smoke, there was fire, and someone tending it. So far out in the middle of nowhere, it couldn't be anyone but your man.

And, leaving such an obvious signal, you had to assume he was waiting for you. You would have to be careful, or else he would catch you by surprise instead of the other way around.

The ruined monastery not only has an excellent view of the surrounding area, it was built atop a highly defensible bluff, with rocky cliffs on three sides, and the fourth being a gently sloping hill leading directly up to the plateau on which the building stands.



Both the hillside and cliffside approaches to the monastery are viable, with each presenting a different advantage and challenge. Attempting to catch the Heretic outside of the building, or draw him out, will ultimately only result in a waste time and resources.

Thanks to the heretic's Lazarus Brand, he does not need to eat, drink or sleep - and so only occasionally leaves the safety of the sacristy to review the nearby landscape or plant additional traps. The next time he does so will be 1d12 hours after the PCs arrive, and unless the party has taken extreme measures to hide themselves, he will spot them quickly with his excellent vantage point and lack of nearby cover.

Sidebar: The benefits of secrecy

Although the Heretic believes he hasn't been followed, he isn't taking chances that he never will, and has set up traps to ward off local monsters and alert him of any approach on his position.

The conclusion of this Episode will differ depending on if the Heretic has been made aware of the party before he is attacked directly. If he has time to prepare, he is able to alert his allies and protect them from discovery; but if caught off guard, the identities of his benefactors - the First Ones themselves - are revealed.

The hillside approach (EL 3/5)

The ground here slopes up gently towards the ruined structure at the top of the cliff, and some ancient remnants of tending are visible here. The ground is smooth and flat in places, and much of the ascent is covered in actual soil, now long since overgrown with brambles and grasses.

While the hillside path seems clear of anything but the occasional bramble, the Heretic has placed game traps in the thickest patches of grass, where the ground *looks* like it would be safe, but is obscured from sight by the undergrowth. A character who makes a **DC 17 Perception check** as the party climbs the hill will notice the first of the traps before anyone steps in it.

There are six traps on the hill, plus an additional two for each day the party lost while tracking the Heretic. After discovering the first (and again each time the party triggers one) each member of the party should make a single **DC 17 Survival or Perception check**. The party then finds a number of traps equal to the number of points their highest roll exceeds 17, while the character with the lowest roll is the character who triggers the next trap, if any remain.

Although not dangerous individually, the traps are loud. If the party sets off three or more, whether deliberately setting them off to disable them or by stumbling into them, the Heretic will become alerted to their presence.

Tier 3

Game Trap (6) **CR 1/2 -- 200 XP**

Type mechanical; **Perception DC 10**; **Disable Device DC 10**
EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** manual

Effect Atk +5 melee (1d6+2)

Tier 5

Barbed Game Trap (6) **CR 1/2 -- 200 XP**

Type mechanical; **Perception DC 10**; **Disable Device DC 15**
EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** manual

Effect Atk +7 melee (2d6+2)

Rewards: the game traps can be collected up, and later sold. If the party collects the game traps, award the PCs as follows:

Tier 3:

Give each PC 150 gp.

Tier 5:

Give each PC 300 gp.

The cliffside approach (EL 3/5)

Rocky, porous, but not quite vertical, the cliff before you would be easy to climb - if it were dry. Instead, the rocks are damp and mottled with an irregular pattern of moss and lichen, making even the largest rocks unstable. Cracks in the cliffside hint at the possibility caves within, but few of them are large enough even for an arm to enter.

Although not built directly overtop the cliff itself, the forgotten monastery overlooks cliffs on three sides. Adjacent to the building, These 50 foot tall cliffs offer plenty of handholds, and are not difficult to climb other than the occasional patches of slick moss, requiring only a **DC 13 Climb check** to safely ascend (made each 15 feet, for an average climber with a 30 foot base move Speed).

Roughly 20 feet up, one large outcropping opens into to a narrow cave, visible to anyone who succeeds a **DC 13 Perception check**. PCs can recognize the signs of a creature living there in advance, by succeeding a **DC 13 Survival or Knowledge (nature)** check before ascending. If the party doesn't know to avoid that particularly large crack the first party member to reach that height will try and use it as a handhold, only to awaken the bats that live there, causing them to emerge in a shrieking mass.

Fortunately for the PCs, the Heretic doesn't consider approach by cliffside to be an option, and disregards any noise the bats make. Unless the PCs make an unusually large amount of noise, approach by this route will not alert the Heretic to their presence.

Tier 3

Bat Swarm CR 2 -- 600 XP

hp 13 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

During Combat the bats will burst from the cave mouth, and swarm there for the first round, before attacking anyone climbing the cliff nearby.

Morale at the end of each round, the bat swarm has a 25% chance of dispersing, as the bats flee.

Cliff Fall Hazard CR 1

Each round a character takes damage while climbing, they must make a **DC 13 Climb check** or fall. From the cave the bats emerge from, the fall does 2d6 points of falling damage.

Tier 5

Bat Swarms (2) CR 2 -- 600 XP each

hp 13 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

During Combat the bats will burst from the cave mouth, and swarm there for the first round, before attacking anyone climbing the cliff nearby.

Morale at the end of each round, each bat swarm individually has a 25% chance of dispersing, as the bats flee.

Cliff Fall Hazard CR 1

Each round a character takes damage while climbing, they must make a **DC 13 Climb check** or fall. From the cave the bats emerge from, the fall does 2d6 points of falling damage.

Treasure the cave where the bats live is too narrow for any creatures larger than Tiny to enter, filled with guano, and ultimately leads nowhere. Searching it reveals a long forgotten parcel of disintegrated papers wrapped around a pouch of Canaan Kings (electrum coins stamped with the king's face), stashed just within arms reach of the cave entrance.

Rewards: if the party finds the forgotten stash, award each player as follows:

Tier 3:

Give each PC 150 gp.

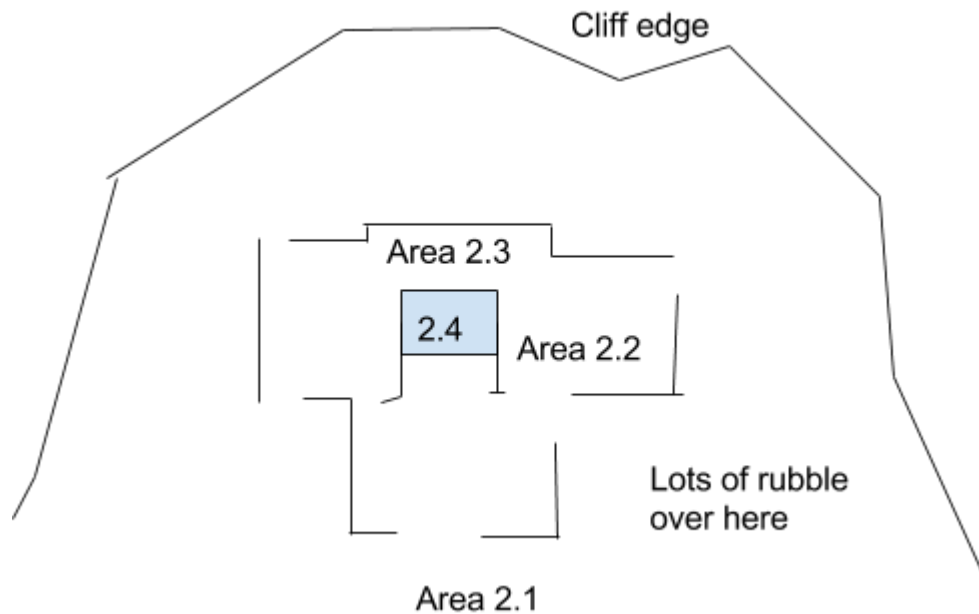
Tier 5:

Give each PC 300 gp.

Act 2 - The Monastery Ruin

The ruin at the top of the cliff is an old monastery, built when the Kaga was young by those who spent their lives contemplating his greatness. But as the Kaga's influence waxed and waned, so too did the use of this remote monastery, and it was eventually abandoned. It has remained abandoned for the better part of a thousand years, and now only the faintest traces remain of its original purpose. In a measure of irony, it is here that the Heretic has taken shelter.

Though its walls aren't as high as they once were, and it lacks any sort of roof, the monastery is out of sight from prying eyes, far from wanderers, and provides the Heretic what minimal shelter he needs. He intends on staying here for several weeks, or until his contacts in the outside world suggest the manhunt for him is over.



Features of the Monastery

Only a few of the monastery's walls remain, irregularly reaching between four and six feet tall. These walls are made of local granite, and held together more through their size and weight than by any ancient mortar. Although rough and not quite even, most walls are covered with mosses that make them difficult to climb, requiring a successful **DC 15 Climb check** to reach the top. Once at the top, a character must succeed a **DC 15 Balance check** each round, or else fall from the wall in a direction of their choice - although falling from this height does no damage.

Around the monastery the ground is rough, once-polished stone, and thanks to the grey ooze, is entirely clear of moss.

Additionally, some areas of the monastery are infested with Bluerakk moss - a phosphorescent and fast-acting variant of the dangerous local Cerekk Moss. In the day, this simply appears to be blue moss, not unlike the rest of the multicolor lichens that blanket the rocks in this area, and spotting it without exposing oneself to it requires a character to succeed a **DC 20 Survival** or a **DC 18 Knowledge (nature or local) Check**. At night, bluerakk glows faintly, providing dim illumination to the monastery and reducing the checks required to **DC 15 Survival** or **DC 13 Knowledge (nature or local)**. Once identified, the moss can be safely avoided without any additional effort.

Bluerakk Moss Spores

Type: Infestation **Save** Fortitude DC 20

Onset: 1 minute **Frequency** 1/10 minutes

Effect 1 Con damage **Cure** cleaning the infestation

Bluerakk moss spores are just as difficult as their less visible cousin to remove completely, requiring a healer to make a **DC 20 Heal or Survival check** to clear the affected creature's system out completely. *Remove disease* kills the infestation immediately.

Area 2.1 - The Building Perimeter (EL 4/6)

Most of this building's walls are begun to topple, some by stone and others in entire sections, and all of it is covered in a rainbow tapestry of moss and lichen. Large gaps in the wall allow you to easily see into the building's interior, which has held together only slightly better than the exterior. Although the walls are covered in moss, it seems someone has gone through the trouble of scrubbing it off the floor.

The exterior walls of the building are dense with Bluerakk moss (see Features of the Monastery), causing the entire building to alight eerily at night, like it were home to ghosts. During the day, it could almost be mistaken for any other large outcropping of rock. Climbing the exterior walls immediately exposes a character to Bluerakk moss.

Unlike the walls, the ground is almost entirely clear. This is because a grey ooze lives atop this cliff face, living mostly on moss spores and the occasional bird dropping. The Heretic has yet to encounter the ooze himself - not noticing it on the slick stone and far too swift for it to catch him. Most of the time, this ooze fills an indent near the remains of the building's front door - characters entering the building must succeed a DC 15 (or 21) Perception check or else step in it if they attempt to use the front door of the building.

SIDEBAR:

This encounter is optional. If there is less than an hour and a half in the session left, and especially if the party had difficulty against the first grey ooze in the wilderness, GMs can skip this encounter.

END SIDEBAR

Tier 3

Grey Ooze CR 4 -- 1,200 XP

hp 50 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

Tier 5

Id Ooze CR 6 -- 2,400 XP

N Medium ooze

Init +1; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft.; **Perception** –3

Defense

AC 7, touch 7, flat-footed 7 (–3 Dex)

hp 62 (4d8+44)

Fort +11, **Ref** –2, **Will** –2

Defensive Abilities ooze traits; **Immune** cold, fire

Offense

Speed 10 ft.

Melee slam +8 (1d6+6 plus 1d6 acid and grab)

Special Attacks acid, constrict (1d6+2 plus 1d6 acid)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th)

At will— [lesser confusion](#) (DC 10)

Statistics

Str 20, **Dex** 5, **Con** 30, **Int** 2, **Wis** 5, **Cha** 5

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +8 (+12 grapple); **CMD** 15 (can't be tripped)

Feats Improved Initiative, Toughness

Skills Stealth +1

Languages telepathy 100 ft (id oozes only)

SQ transparent

Special Abilities

Acid (Ex) The digestive acid that covers an id ooze dissolves metals and organic material, but not stone. Each slam and constrict attack deals 1d6 additional acid damage. Armor or clothing worn by a creature grappled by an id ooze takes the same amount of acid damage unless the wearer succeeds on a **DC 22 Reflex saving throw**. A wooden or metal weapon that strikes a gray ooze takes 1d6 acid damage unless the weapon's wielder succeeds on a **DC 22 Reflex save**. The ooze's touch deals 12 points of acid damage per round to wooden or metal objects, but the ooze must remain in contact with the material for 1 full round in order to deal this damage. The save DCs are Constitution-based.

Transparent (Ex) Due to its lack of vivid coloration, an id ooze is difficult to discern from its surroundings in most environments. A **DC 21 Perception check** is required to see a stationary id ooze. Any creature that fails to notice a id ooze and walks into it automatically suffers damage as if struck by the ooze's slam attack and is immediately subject to a grab attempt by the ooze.

Area 2.2 - The Beast on the Hill (EL 3/5)

A large section of wall here has collapsed inward, likely when the eight-inch crack opened in the middle of the floor, running most of the length of the room. From out of it, a tumble of mushrooms and other odd fungus reaches like a lonely tree in the middle of the room.

Although it resembles any other crack, the small crevasse here in the middle of the room ultimately reaches down for well over a mile, into a series of caverns deep beneath the surface of exodus. Although this crack rarely serves as more than a drain for rainwater, the narrow passage also has allowed the escape of a pair of fungal crawlers - a sort of half-plant, half-insect. Excellent adaptors, the Fungal Crawlers spend most of each day in the bright sunlight, drawing meager strength from its rays.

The crack is large enough that characters moving more than half speed through its square must succeed a **DC 10 Acrobatics check** or trip in it, falling prone. Fortunately, the crack is narrow enough that even the smallest characters aren't at risk of accidentally falling - although anything dropped down is effectively lost forever.

Tier 3

Although two fungal crawlers emerged from the underground, after a clash with the grey ooze only one remains. It will remain absolutely still as anyone approaches (with a Stealth of 15), with a readied attack for anyone who comes within reach. If struck by any ranged attacks, it immediately leaps onto its opponents.

Fungal Crawler **CR 3 -- 800 XP**

hp 26 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2*)

Morale the fungal crawler fights to the death

Tier 5

The fungal crawlers huddle together, almost absolutely still (with a Stealth of 13) but with a readied attack if anyone comes within reach. Once one of them attacks, the other leaps overtop of the victim to attack with the advantage of flanking.

Fungal Crawler (2) CR 3 -- 800 XP

hp 26 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2*)

Morale the fungal crawlers fight to the death

Rewards: The PCs aren't the first adventurers these fungal crawlers have caught, and the remains of an unlucky mountaineer, and his gear, lie beneath where they had been resting.

Tier 3:

Give each PC 50 gp and a *potion of cure light wounds*.

Tier 5:

Give each PC 150 gp and a *potion of cure light wounds*.

Area 2.3 - The Sacristy Doors

Standing here in the center of the building is a single, intact room. A heavy oak door fits snugly into a doorframe, new despite the age and wear of the stone around it. The walls around it are stone, but unlike the mostly smooth stone elsewhere they seem to be carvings here, buried beneath the layers of moss and lichen.

The rear wall of the monastery is reasonably intact, and covered with Bluerakk moss, but as with other rooms in the monastery, this room's original purpose has long been erased. More interestingly to the party, however, it contains the only door to the monastery's sacristy, in which the Heretic has holed himself up.

The sacristy itself, a small room in the center of the compound, has weathered its years of abandonment quite well. The walls are intact up to eight feet high, and covered inside and out with carved frescos depicting mortal perspectives of the kaga's ascension and miracles. A character who examines the murals can make out a brief history of the Kaga; and they might learn any of the ancient events described in the adventure background.

It is immediately obvious that the door here is not the original door. Upon arriving, the Heretic drew upon the Lazarus Brand's magic to repair the splinters of wood that remained into a solid door, and then again to place a ward on the door that would trigger if anyone but himself were to open it.

When the party arrives at the sacristy doors, read or paraphrase the following:

You can hear one side of a discussion coming from the other side of the elaborate oak doors, their pristine condition in these ruins suggesting they are the work of magic. "--already feel Kaga is coming apart. But unless you have begun other countermeasures, it will be at least six weeks before I can return to spreading the

truth.” The voice said, with no emotion in its voice but its volume betraying that it is frustrated if not angry, “If you take care of your end of the deal, I will begin siphoning off his power any day now. Wait, I hear something.”

There is a momentary pause, and then a whip-like crack before the voice continued, “Just a bird. Now, will the brand last that long?”

The voice inside the sacristy is indeed the Heretic’s - but it is only possible for a character to hear the Heretic’s conversation partner if they succeed a **DC 23 Perception check**. The other speaker is quiet and calm, and convinced that “the plan” is unfolding smoothly.

A character who succeeds a **DC 18 Perception check** while examining the door can tell that it isn’t locked, but it is barred from the other side. Additionally, a character with trapfinding or using *detect magic* who succeeds their Perception check will recognize that the door has a simple ward on it, keyed to trigger if any non-android tried to open the door.

Grease Ward Trap CR 0

Type magic; **Perception** DC 18; **Disable Device** DC 20

Effects

Trigger open door (*alarm*); **Reset** none

Effect spell effect (*grease*, DC 13 Reflex or fall. If any character in medium or heavy armor falls, it alerts the Heretic.); multiple squares (10x10 square directly in front of door)

Unlocking the door without alerting the Heretic requires precision. Characters attempting to unlock the door (**DC 18 Disable Device** to remove the bar from this side) must also succeed a **DC 15 Stealth check** for each Disable Device check made or else the Heretic will be alerted to their presence. Even after successfully unbarring the door, the party has only 1d4 rounds to breach the room before the Heretic notices.

Attempting to break the door down requires speed. Characters attempting to break the door down must succeed a **DC 18 Strength check** to burst in the door in a single blow, or else it requires more than one blow, alerting the Heretic to their presence.

Characters can take advantage of the building’s lack of a roof and enter the Sacristy through the roof, by climbing the walls (**DC 15 Climb**) or otherwise taking to the air. Using any metal tools to climb the wall (such as grappling hooks or climbing gear) makes enough noise to alert the Heretic to their presence.

Act 3 - Inside The Sacristy

The Heretic has had a few days to make this isolated room it his own, and create some modest furnishings from material gathered from nearby - with the help of magic drawn from his Lazarus Brand. He has few physical needs, and uses his free time to prepare traps in the case anyone manages to follow him.

The heretic doesn’t mind - the Lazarus Brand marked on his chest makes him single-minded, ignorant of anything more than the essentials of survival.

Area 2.4 - The Sacristy

If the PCs have not alerted the Heretic by this time, when they enter the Sacristy read or paraphrase the following:

The interior of the room is neat and orderly - a stool, a bed, and a small fire burning in a metal pot. Only a few feet from the door, the heretic stumbles backwards, caught off guard by the interruption. He looks human, but lines buried in his carefully sculpted flesh glow teal with the circuitry that hides underneath. In the center of his bare chest, a distinct rune glows with a different rhythm than the rest: a dark, pattern of triangular lines, interrupted by a horizontal silver bar not quite inlaid into his skin.

The heretic turns to the far side of the room, where a translucent skull floats - an illusion projected from elsewhere. The skull, through the image, seems to be carved from some sort of violet crystal, with eyes glowing near white hot. The skull locks eyes with the heretic for only a moment, and commands the Heretic to “deal with them” before the image winks out.

The heretic sneers. “You are servants of the Kaga. Don’t deny it, he sent you here to stop me, Second Built, from revealing his secrets, and supplanting his power. He wants his flock suitably in the dark when he turns on them. Really, how much do you know of the man-god?”

A character can identify the skull with a successful **DC 15 Knowledge (history or local) check** - it is the face of Cyrix, a cruel sentient construct that nations across Exodus have consistently denied the existence of. In fact, their staunch and immediate denial have lead many to believe that Cyrix has some sort of sway over the governments of the lands where he is said to roam.

See below for knowledge checks made about the Heretic.

If the PCs have alerted the Heretic before their arrival, when they enter the Sacristy read or paraphrase the following:

The interior of the room is neat and orderly - a stool, a bed, and a small fire burning in a metal pot. Only a few feet from the door, the heretic turns to regard you smoothly, having appeared to be expected you. He looks human, but lines buried in his carefully sculpted flesh glow teal with the circuitry that hides underneath. In the center of his bare chest, a distinct rune glows with a different rhythm than the rest: a dark, pattern of triangular lines, interrupted by a horizontal silver bar not quite inlaid into his skin.

The heretic turns to the far side of the room, to cluster of disappearing motes, and then back to you once more. “You are servants of the Kaga. Don’t deny it, he sent you here to stop me, Second Built, from revealing his secrets, and supplanting his power. He wants his flock suitably in the dark when he turns on them. Really, how much do you know of the man-god?”

It is expected that characters are familiar with the Kaga - it is one of the key historical figures in Exodus, and near deific in power. A character who makes a successful **DC 10 Knowledge (history) check** recalls some of his basic history; that he was formed from combination of mankind's greatest minds at the dawn of recorded history. That it is often heralded as the savior of mortalkind from the tyranny of the First Ones. Characters passing the check by 10 or more also recall that the Kaga is the only creature with detailed knowledge of times prior to the defeat of the First Ones, and it isn't talking.

A character can identify the name Second Built by succeeding a **DC 20 Knowledge (history) check**. It is a name that would hold significance to androids, many of whom often name themselves literally. To be the second android built would be to have been created by Genesis One, the first Exodan Android.

A character can identify Androids by succeeding a **DC 10 Knowledge (local or history)**, as a race of artificial lifeforms created to serve as servants of and vessels for the Kaga. Succeeding by 5 or more also recalls that androids were not intended to have free will - they were originally expected to be almost mindlessly subservient to their creator god.

A character can identify the rune on the Heretic's chest by succeeding a **DC 12 Knowledge (arcana or religion) check**. It is a Lazarus Brand: a mark of the prophet Lawgiver, to his disciples to preach the end of times. It has been known to grant exceptional powers to those imbued with it. However, this particular brand doesn't quite match the depictions you have seen of it. A character who passes their check by 5 or more recognizes that the bar running across it is not part of the brand itself, and seems to be a deliberate modification of the symbol.

Regardless of how much the PCs know about his claims, as his first action in combat, the Heretic will Withdraw by leaping upwards, overtop of the nearest wall, and into area 2.2.

From his new, relatively safe location, he will attempt to convince the PCs of the errors of their ways, and bring them to his way of thinking. Each round, the Heretic will make a single argument to the PCs, carefully phrased to twist the truth to suit his purposes. Nothing the Heretic says is fully true; and knowledgeable characters might be able to identify how the Heretic is twisting the truth. Correcting the Heretic (as a Swift action) will leave him fuming, causing him to be Staggered on his next turn. Some of the arguments the Heretic is likely to make, and their counterarguments, are listed below.

"The only proof man has that they were freed of any sort of enslavement is the word of a self proclaimed god. So long has his word been listened to as gospel that none even suspect the truth: the kaga seeks to one day claim rulership of all the world."

Knowledge (history) DC 13: There are plenty of records of enslavement, from many races. The long memory of the Cavians and the stories of the P'Tan all agree: the Kaga fought the First Ones and freed mortalkind from oppression.

"Even the Venerates have seen fit to bless me with a Lazarus Brand, a mark that grants me incredible power, and proves the worth of my message."

Knowledge (religion) DC 13: The venerates are the divine agents of Tarac the Sanguine Lord - if the Sanguine Lord had reason to doubt the Kaga, he would act more directly than a single prophet. (this argument alone does not stagger the Heretic); **Knowledge (religion) DC 18** only the Lawgiver can bestow the Lazarus Brand, the brands of the venerates are separate things entirely. The mark he has isn't a true brand, and holds no true power, if it was not bestowed by the Lawgiver himself.

"Agents of the Kaga fear my message, and so have sent you to destroy me. Do not allow yourselves to be tools of a false god who I will soon devour."

(no check required) Any argument about how the Heretic cannot plausibly seek to single-handedly overthrow a god will disrupt the Heretic. Arguments about who sent the party do not stagger the Heretic.

"My enslaved brethren have such a horrified reaction to my message, but not one of them has questioned who I am? The second android built? That is nonsense. That would make me over a decade old, and I don't look a day over four. They question the truth and accept the falsehoods, as the Kaga has created them to do."

Knowledge (local) DC 18: The androids give names the power they do because they have the freedom to change them. Using the name Second Built to empower their message is no different than any human calling themselves the Kaga. They will not fight against it because it is an obvious falsehood, not because they believe it.

Tier 3

The Heretic, Second Built MR 1 / CR 6 -- 2,400 XP

Agile Android Monk 6 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Mythic Adventures*)

NE Medium Humanoid (android)

Init +22 / +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 dodge, +2 insight)

hp 51 (6d8+24)

Fort +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +8; +4 versus mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, stun

Defensive Abilities evasion, still mind, slow fall 30 ft., purity of body; **Immune** fatigue, exhaustion, disease, sleep, fear, emotion-based effects

OFFENSE

Spd 80 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +8 (1d8+4) or flurry of blows unarmed strike +8/+8/+3 (1d8+4)

Special Attacks dual initiative, flurry of blows, ki pool (magic), maneuver training, stunning fist (4/day, DC 14; stunned or fatigued), unarmed strike (1d8)

TACTICS

During Combat on the first round of combat, the Heretic uses a Ki point to increase his Acrobatics bonus (to +40) and Withdraws by leaping directly up, and over the nearby wall to prepare for the next round from a more advantageous position.

Morale Any time he is flanked or otherwise cornered, the Heretic uses Acrobatics to Withdraw to a more advantageous position. The Heretic fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 8

Base Atk +4; CMB +9; CMD 20

Feats Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Mobility, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Acrobatics), Stunning Fist, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +14 (+20 to jump), Escape Artist +11, Knowledge (religion) +9, Perception +10, Sense Motive -3

Languages Common

SQ constructed, emotionless, high jump, sustained by power

Gear *amulet of mighty fists* +1

Special Abilities

Dual Initiative (Ex) The Heretic gets two turns each round, one on its initiative count and another on its initiative count – 20. This is indicated by having two initiative scores, although the Heretic only rolls initiative once. For the purposes of spells and effects that have a duration of a round or longer or trigger at the beginning of the Heretic's round or the start of his turn (such as saving throws against ongoing effects or taking bleed damage), only his first turn each round counts toward such durations.

Nanite Surge (Ex) The Heretic's body is infused with nanites. Once per day as an immediate action, the Heretic can cause his nanites to surge, granting a +9 bonus on any one d20 roll; this ability must be activated before rolling. When the Heretic uses this power, his circuitry-tattoos glow with light equivalent in illumination to a torch for 1 round.

Sustained By Power (Su) The Heretic draws sustenance directly from his Lazarus Brand, and no longer needs to eat, drink or sleep.

Lazarus Brand (Su) Although it offers only him limited mythic power, the Heretic can draw on the Lazarus Brand on his chest as a swift action, granting him a +5 bonus on any one d20 roll, either before rolling or before the results of the roll are revealed. When the Heretic uses this power, the Lazarus brand on his chest sucks in all the light around it, making it appear to glow black, and decreasing the surrounding illumination within 30 feet for 1 round.

Tier 5

The Heretic, Second Built MR1 / CR 8 -- 4,800 XP

Agile Android Monk 8 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Mythic Adventures*)

NE Medium Humanoid (android)

Init +22 / +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +2 dodge, +3 insight)

hp 64 (8d8+30)

Fort +8, **Ref** +8, **Will** +9; +4 versus mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, stun

Defensive Abilities evasion, still mind, slow fall 40 ft., purity of body, wholeness of body;

Immune fatigue, exhaustion, disease, sleep, fear, emotion-based effects

OFFENSE

Spd 80 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +9/+4 (1d10+3) or flurry of blows unarmed strike +9/+9/+4/+4 (1d10+3)

Special Attacks dual initiative, flurry of blows, ki pool (magic, cold iron/silver), maneuver training, stunning fist (4/day, DC 14; stunned or fatigued), unarmed strike (1d8)

TACTICS

During Combat on the first round of combat, the Heretic uses a Ki point to increase his Acrobatics bonus (to +40) and Withdraws by leaping directly up, and over the nearby wall to prepare for the next round from a more advantageous position.

Morale Any time he is flanked or otherwise cornered, the Heretic uses Acrobatics to Withdraw to a more advantageous position, drinking one of his potions to recover as he repositions. The Heretic fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 20

Feats Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Mobility, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Acrobatics), Snatch Arrows, Stunning Fist, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +16 (+22 to jump), Escape Artist +13, Knowledge (religion) +11, Perception +12, Sense Motive -3

Languages Common

SQ constructed, emotionless, high jump, sustained by power

Combat Gear *potions of cure serious wounds (2)*; **Other Gear** *amulet of mighty fists +1*

Special Abilities

Dual Initiative (Ex) The Heretic gets two turns each round, one on its initiative count and another on its initiative count – 20. This is indicated by having two initiative scores, although the Heretic only rolls initiative once. For the purposes of spells and effects that have a duration of a round or longer or trigger at the beginning of the Heretic's round or the start of his turn (such as saving throws against ongoing effects or taking bleed damage), only his first turn each round counts toward such durations.

Nanite Surge (Ex) The Heretic's body is infused with nanites. Once per day as an immediate action, the Heretic can cause his nanites to surge, granting a +11 bonus on any one d20 roll; this ability must be activated before rolling. When the Heretic uses this power, his circuitry-tattoos glow with light equivalent in illumination to a torch for 1 round.

Sustained By Power (Su) The Heretic draws sustenance directly from his Lazarus Brand, and no longer needs to eat, drink or sleep.

Lazarus Brand (Su) Although it offers only him limited mythic power, the Heretic can draw on the Lazarus Brand on his chest as a swift action, granting him a +5 bonus on any one d20 roll, either before rolling or before the results of the roll are revealed. When the Heretic uses this power, the Lazarus brand on his chest sucks in all the light around it, making it appear to glow black, and decreasing the surrounding illumination within 30 feet for 1 round.

Treasure: embedded into the Heretic's chest, incorporated into his forged Lazarus Brand is a Mirrored Rod. It is not quite flush with his chest, and any character examining him can tell that it isn't permanently affixed to him, allowing them to take it if they so choose.

If the PCs don't take it, when the androids collect the body (either from the PCs bringing it to them or later, on their own), the collective discovers the Mirrored Rod and passes it along to the Alliance Freelancers as an item of curiosity.

Rewards: Upon returning with proof of defeating the Heretic, the party is paid their share of the sizable bounty by the Alliance Freelancers.

Tier 3:

Give each PC 1,000 gp.

Tier 5:

Give each PC 2,000 gp.

Conclusion

The return from the monastery is quick, and uneventful - even if the party is carrying the entire corpse of the Heretic with them. If the party returns without proof, they will have to wait two days after returning while a rider for the Kaga's Faithful rides out to recover the body and verify their claim, before being paid.

Once the party's deeds have been proven, the Android Collective, and the Kaga's Faithful pay the bounty and begin planning on how to undo the damage the Heretic has done. If the party has any lingering doubts of what the Heretic said, the Kaga's Faithful will happily discuss them, pointing out the falsehoods in each argument.

The Faithful have no idea where the Heretic may have received the Lazarus Brand, or why he believed that he might be able to overthrow a god. Many have tried to recreate the circumstances of the Kaga's ascension before, but none they are aware of have tried to dethrone the god of man.

However, the damage done by the Heretic is extensive, as doubt is no easy thing to erase. It will be a long time before most of those who heard the Heretic's message can fully trust the Kaga again.

If the party learned the identity of (or can accurately describe) the Heretic's co-conspirator, this revelation will be met by nervous laughter. The Kaga's Faithful will suggest that the party must have mistaken some other undead for what they say; The idea that some sentient construct, who doesn't officially exist, is seeking to overthrow the gods themselves seems ridiculous. Christine takes a subtle note of the matter. Although she has been instructed to not officially talk about it, she has heard news of Cyrix's activities on the rise, and doesn't want to take any chances at not knowing something key in case the Freelancers have to later take action.

Items to Include on Record of Legacy 0.1

Did the party get to see the Heretic's co-conspirator?

Did the party keep the Mirrored Rod, or return it to the Alliance Freelancers?

Items found during this episode:

Tier 3

Amulet of mighty fists +1 (4,000 gp)

1,000 gp

Tier 5

Amulet of mighty fists +1 (4,000 gp)

Potion of cure serious wounds (750 gp)

4,000 gp

Experience Reward

Each party member gains 3XP

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