



# THE LAST PARSEC LEVIATHAN

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# CHAPTER ONE: EVERYTHING'S BIGGER ON LEVIATHAN!

Tired of the same old vacation lounging on the beach at Proxima Centauri or staring at the Horsehead Nebula from the observation deck of a boring, cookie-cutter star liner?

Want more out of your spare time than waiting in a line at some pre-packaged, over-hyped amusement satellite populated by actors wearing holosuits of some kiddie cartoon character?

Would you rather see Nature at its grandest and face it head-on, instead of staring at them on the trid screen from the confines of an over-stuffed easy chair?

Are you up to the *biggest* challenges that Known Space has to offer?

Is adrenaline your drug of choice?

If you answered an emphatic "YES!" to any of those questions, then *Vestal Interplanetary's* newest attraction is exactly what you're looking for!

Leviathan offers something no other vacation destination can—the chance to interact with a nearly untouched wilderness that is home to some of the most fantastic, and definitely *largest*, creatures in the Known Worlds.

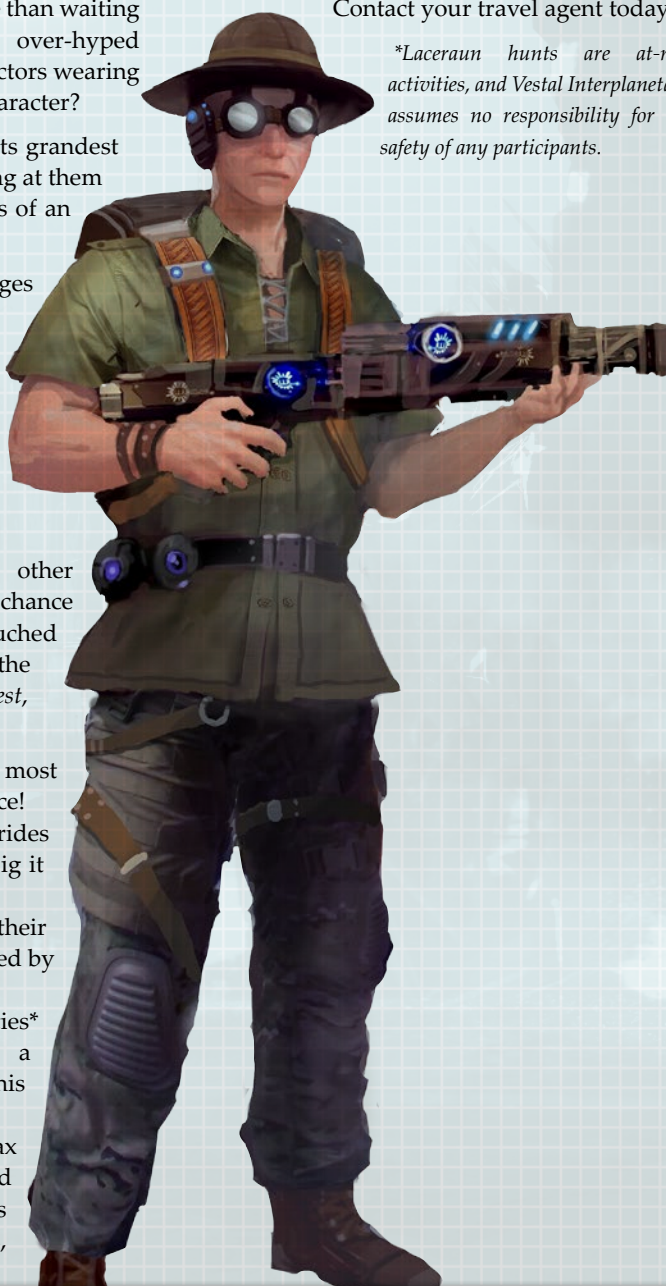
- See the incredible A-Pex, the most massive land predator in existence!
- Marvel at the earth-shaking strides of the Behemoth, a creature so big it dwarfs some spacecraft!
- View herds of lacerauns in their natural environment, unblemished by civilization!
- Join organized hunting parties\* to stalk the closest thing to a dinosaur you're likely to see in this millennium!

In between excursions, relax in one of our lavishly appointed settlements, where every comfort is close at hand. Dozens of restaurants,

casinos, theaters, and more are available for your enjoyment; or for those members of the family who'd rather spend their time pampered by our pleasant staff and ample amenities.

Contact your travel agent today!

*\*Laceraun hunts are at-risk activities, and Vestal Interplanetary assumes no responsibility for the safety of any participants.*





EVERYTHING'S BIGGER ON LEVIATHAN!



EVERYTHING'S BIGGER ON LEVIATHAN!





## CHAPTER TWO: CHARACTERS

Leviathan is a frontier planet, on the fringes of the Known Worlds. However, unlike most other worlds on the border of civilization, the colonists aren't as concerned with developing it for further habitation. Instead, the planet has been specifically groomed to be a planet-sized wildlife preserve where massive creatures, known as lacerauns, can be observed in their natural habitat—or hunted for sport.

While Leviathan's capital, Ralston, has some of the finest luxury resorts and entertainment venues found in the galaxy, the planet is home to only a few other settlements. Most of the world is still in its natural state, which roughly corresponds to the Cretaceous through Jurassic periods on Earth. In other words, it's rough, unsettled, and filled with giant lizard-like creatures capable of swallowing the average spacer in a single gulp.

It's not surprising, therefore, that certain skills—particularly those useful in wilderness environments—are valuable on Leviathan. Survival, Healing, and Tracking, in particular, are likely to be valuable to travelers on the planet. Likewise, the vast distances between outposts mean Piloting, Driving, and Boating are virtual necessities for at least one or more team members to possess.

However, planetary security and search-and-rescue duties are provided by JumpSec, the JumpCorp subsidiary that specializes in providing corporate protective services, and it can find a fit for nearly any skill set if the spacer is adventurous enough to brave the wilds of the unique planet.

### SAMPLE CHARACTERS

**Explorer:** Although satellite imagery has provided photos of the entire surface of the planet, Leviathan's thick jungles prevent it from showing what's under the millions of square miles of dense foliage. These adventurers delve into the uninhabited reaches of the planet, often

for no other reason than the thrill of discovery. Others in the employ of corporations seek out undiscovered resources, new hunting grounds, or suitable locations for settlements.

**Guide:** These skilled outdoorsmen lead expeditions out of Ralston and the other settlements. Experienced guides are highly sought after by hunting, sightseeing, and research groups. They are most often on the payroll of one corporation or another, but some freelancers can and do make a comfortable living providing this service.

**Hunter:** Guided hunting tours are a large part of tourism on Leviathan. Few hunters can pass up the chance to claim bringing down a "dinosaur"—assuming they can afford the cost of a trip to the planet. However, hunting multi-ton monsters isn't a simple point-and-shoot affair, so most reputable tours include at least one hunter to safeguard their customers. Planetary officials also employ professional hunters to help keep the ecological balance and protect visitors and colonists from aggressive wildlife.

**Med Tech:** Only Ralston has a true trauma facility for treatment of serious injuries. Emergency technicians and frontier doctors handle most medical matters on Leviathan, often with no more than the contents of their med bags. A skilled sawbones is always welcome in any settlement or on any trip into the back country.

**Pilot:** Outside of the main settlements, established roads are virtually nonexistent. And while getting up close and personal with the massive lacerauns might be what drives the tourist trade, it's not especially conducive to a stable logistics network. Nearly all long-distance transportation on the planet is accomplished via aircraft, making skilled pilots always in high demand.

**Researcher:** Leviathan's unique life forms provide unique opportunities to researchers from all the life sciences. However, it's not a place for scientists who prefer to do their work in sterile



laboratories or libraries. Only the most dedicated, ambitious, or foolhardy choose to do their experiments surrounded by creatures capable of crushing a hovercar underfoot.

**Security Operatives:** Trained security specialists have their hands full planetside. Defending against an attack by a veritable dinosaur is something very few guards elsewhere in the universe have to prepare for. Worse, outside the settlements, there are seldom any JumpSec officers to protect against two-legged predators.

**Surveyor:** Where explorers are drawn to Leviathan by their sense of adventure, surveyors provide an important service to the corporations and settlers. Surveyors not only map surface regions, they also provide accurate inventories of natural resources and mineral wealth. Some are employed to monitor migrations and other large-scale animal movements.

**Technician:** Technology is the only advantage sentient visitors to Leviathan have over the lacerauns. Vehicles, computer networks, and repeller fields are useless if they're not working. Techs are the front line troops in the battle keeping that vital gear functioning in the face of entropy, the environment, and rampaging beasts the size of houses.

## NEW HINDRANCE

### WEAK STOMACH (MINOR)

Your spacer's digestive system doesn't react well to new or unusual foods. If your hero's native cuisine, or at least the bland concoction of proteins and starches found in most ship's galleys, isn't available, he must make a Vigor roll to eat the available fare. A failure on the roll means he simply can't digest it, while a 1 on his Vigor die (regardless of the Wild Die) means he regurgitates the meal almost immediately—which may have unpleasant social consequences as well.

This Hindrance can complicate survival situations for your spacer as described under **Hunger** in *Savage Worlds*. Note that in no way does this Hindrance allow your hero to eat substances normally otherwise not consumable by his species.

## NEW PROFESSIONAL EDGES

### EXPLORER

**Requirements:** Novice, Vigor d6+, Survival d8+

Your hero has mastered the art of surviving in a variety of climates and environments. She receives a +2 bonus to Survival rolls. Additionally, she's got a knack for picking the best route through rough ground. She and a number of accompanying characters treat the terrain type (see **Travel** in *Savage Worlds*) as one level better (so Hard becomes Average, for example), to a minimum of Easy.

### SCOUT

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Notice d6+, Survival d6+

Your traveler has learned to spot warning signs and trust his instincts in the wilderness. Anytime the Game Master rolls a random encounter while traveling planetside, your spacer may make a Notice roll (–2). If he's successful, he spots the hazard, creature, or situation at the earliest possible opportunity. This likely gives his party time to avoid the threat, or at least approach it on its own terms. Your hero also gains a +2 to Notice rolls made to avoid surprise (see *Savage Worlds*) in tactical situations.





## GEAR

Ralston and Vestal's other primary population centers tend to be very well-stocked with gear, particularly with items that are useful in a hostile, wilderness environment. However, since Leviathan isn't exactly a free market, the corporation is also prone to adding a sizable profit margin to anything it sells. After all, a hunter who arrives on the planet only to discover he left a vital piece of gear on his home world doesn't have much bargaining power. And while personal repellers don't grow on trees, the parasites they ward off do!

Assume a flat mark-up of 50% for any item purchased on Leviathan above the prices listed, including those in this book.

## PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

**Distillation Kit:** The high humidity on Leviathan makes accumulating water a fairly easy proposition, especially when an explorer is outfitted with one of these. A distillation kit can extract enough drinkable water from the atmosphere each day to meet the needs of one individual of a non-aquatic race. It adds +1 to Survival rolls to find sustenance. The kit comes with a belt pouch and collapsible water bladder. (1 lb, C\$50)

**Ionization Suit:** Some of the animals on Leviathan—usually the big predators—can detect the electrical fields created by living creatures. Conventional camouflage is of limited use against those lacerauns. An ionization suit dampens the emanations of its wearer's bioelectrical field, rendering him invisible to the unique senses of the planet's fauna. The giant denizens of Leviathan can still see though, and since this does nothing to hide the user from simple visual detection, it's usually combined with other camouflage methods. An ionization suit also cancels the field created by a personal repeller, rendering the repeller useless, so only the most dedicated hunters wear one for any length of time! (4 lbs., C\$2,500)

**Personal Repeller:** This small device is designed to attach to a belt or similar piece of clothing. Like the larger static field generators, it creates a weak electrical field around the wearer. Unlike the larger static generators, the field produced by a personal repeller isn't strong enough to ward off a laceraun—but it might upset one's stomach *after* it eats you!—but it does keep smaller pest creatures at bay. A spacer wearing a personal

repeller does not have to make a daily Vigor check to avoid Fatigue caused by bites and stings. They are a necessity for anyone who spends any time outside the main settlement. The device's battery contains enough power to run it continuously for seventy-two hours before needing to be recharged, which can be done in most permanent structures and vehicles. (1 lb, C\$100)

**Portable Static Field Generator:** These use the innate sensitivity most life on Leviathan has to electrical fields to function as "invisible fencing." While the barriers repel lacerauns and most colemata fairly reliably, they have no effect on off-world species beyond a slight tingling sensation when passing through them. Most settlements are equipped with permanent, more powerful versions of these field generators, but these models are sized to allow relatively easy transport into the wilderness where they're most often used to protect temporary campsites. Only an enraged laceraun is likely to attempt to cross a static repeller barrier, and then only if it succeeds on a Spirit roll (-2).

Each static field generator's battery is sufficient to maintain a field for 16 hours and can be recharged in five hours. The generators come in three sizes—Small, Medium, and Large—and each size protects an equivalent-sized Burst Template. (Small, 10 lbs, C\$1,250; Medium, 25 lbs, C\$3,000; Large, 40 lbs, C\$5,000)

**Survival Kit:** Survival kits sold on Leviathan tend to be fairly well equipped. A single contains a distillation kit (see above) and three days of bland, but life-sustaining emergency rations. The kit also contains a sturdy knife (Str+d4), a small emergency beacon (100-mile range), and supplies that provide a +1 bonus to Survival rolls. (5 lbs, C\$150)

## WEAPONS

## MELEE WEAPONS

**Laceraun Prod:** A laceraun prod is little more than an extra-long, old-fashioned, electric cattle goad. Any target hit by an attacker using one of these must make a Vigor roll at -2. If he fails, he's automatically Shaken. Resolve the damage from the weapon first, then the stunning charge.

The sensitivity of many of Leviathan's creatures, specifically lacerauns, to electrical fields makes them very susceptible to these simple weapons. A laceraun hit by one of these must immediately make a Spirit roll or be Panicked (see *Savage Worlds*), in addition to the possible stunning



effects and damage. While they are fairly effective deterrents against the dinosaur-like animals on the planet, most colonists use them only against the smaller species of lacerauns. Having to be within a little more than arm's reach of a giant carnivore doesn't make for an ideal combat situation.

Any melee weapon equipped with a stunning charge (see *Science Fiction Companion*) has a similar effect on lacerauns.

**Machete:** This relatively primitive weapon enjoys popularity on Leviathan for its more mundane purpose: chopping a path through vegetation. A hero equipped with a machete can reduce the overland speed modifier for himself and up to three companions from Hard and Difficult jungle or marsh terrain by 1 when using it to help cut a trail. It has no effect on improving movement in other terrain types. Although also available with molecular blades (see **Close Combat Weapons** in the *Science Fiction Companion*), those high-tech versions provide no advantage when used for trail breaking.

## RANGED WEAPONS

**Laceraun Rifle:** To take down the massive beasts on Leviathan, only a suicidal hunter relies on a run-of-the-mill hunting rifle. Laceraun rifles are typically available only on Leviathan and restricted as military weapons elsewhere. The gun is based on old Earth anti-vehicular rifles and designed to penetrate the thick hide of the

giant lizards, while still packing enough punch to bring the beast down.

Still, even with one of these massive slug throwers, a smart sportsman takes his shot from as far away as possible to make sure he gets a second one (or can just run away) if necessary—and it often is!

These bulky firearms are all equipped with telescopic sights and bipods (see *Savage Worlds*). Their massive size—nearly 7 feet long—and recoil make them impossible to fire from any position other than prone, with a bipod supporting the barrel.

**Tranquilizer Gun:** These compressed-air weapons fire large darts and are designed to temporarily sedate an animal for capture or study. Armor of +3 or greater value stops the dart, rendering the attack useless.

A target hit by a tranquilizer gun must make a Vigor roll (–2 if hit with a raise) at the beginning of its next two actions. On a failure, it acquires two levels of Fatigue, and with a success only one. If the target gets a raise on the Vigor roll, he suffers no further effect from the dart, but keeps any Fatigue levels he may have already acquired.

To be effective, a tranquilizer dart must contain a dosage suitable to the Size of a target. If the creature is larger or smaller than the dosage, it gains a modifier to its Vigor roll equal to the difference. For example, a human (Size +0) hit by a tranquilizer dosed for large dog (Size –1) receives a +1 bonus, but a –2 penalty versus a

## MELEE WEAPONS

Type	Damage	Weight	Cost
Laceraun Prod	Str+1d6	2	C\$500
<b>Notes:</b> Reach 1. See description.			
Machete	Str+1d6	1	C\$25
<b>Notes:</b> —			

## RANGED WEAPONS

Type	Range	Damage	RoF	Shots	Min Str	Weight	Cost
Tranquilizer Pistol	2/4/6	Special	1	1	—	3	C\$700
<b>Notes:</b> See Tranquilizer Gun, above.							
Tranquilizer Rifle	4/8/16	Special	1	1	—	6	C\$2000
<b>Notes:</b> See Tranquilizer Gun, above.							
Laceraun Rifle	50/100/200	3d10	1	3	d8	60	C\$1000
<b>Notes:</b> AP 6, Snapfire Penalty, HW							



dosage for a bear (Size +2). There is no upper limit to the bonus for an inadequate dose, but the max penalty is limited to -4 for excessive dosages.

Setting the dosage for a single dart requires an action and can only be performed on a dart not already loaded in a tranquilizer gun. A rifle dart can be dosed up to Size +7, but a pistol dart dosage is limited to Size +3.

A shooter can increase the dosage to apply a penalty to a target's Vigor roll, but this can be dangerous. Tranquilizers normally don't cause more than an Incapacitated effect when appropriately dosed, but if a target is hit with a dosage for a creature 2+ Sizes larger and would gain an additional level of Fatigue beyond Incapacitated, he dies in 2d6 rounds unless another character makes a Healing roll at -4. If a target critically fails one of the Vigor rolls, the tranquilizer causes a heart attack (as per the **Fear Table** result from *Savage Worlds*).

Creatures Incapacitated by a tranquilizer dart are rendered unconscious until at least one level of Fatigue is recovered. Fatigue levels caused by a tranquilizer dart are recovered at the rate of one every 30 minutes.

## VEHICLES

Leviathan lacks much in the way of infrastructure outside the primary settlements. As a result, the vehicles commonly encountered on the planet are more rugged and oriented toward overcoming the obstacles a wilderness environment presents.

### VEHICLE MODIFICATIONS

Here are a couple of standard pieces of equipment found on some vehicles planetside. Due to the nature of the environment of Leviathan, these are seldom encountered elsewhere.

**Mods** is the number of vehicle modification slots the upgrade requires.

Cost is the typical cost to apply the modification to a given vehicle.

### ELECTRIFIED HULL

This modification lines a vehicle's exterior with contacts that can be charged to deliver a powerful shock. Any creature coming in contact with an activated electrified hull must make a Vigor roll at -2 or be Shaken. Lacerauns, due to their sensitivity to electrical fields, must also make a Spirit roll or be Panicked (see *Savage Worlds*).

Safety reasons aside, an electrified hull can only be kept charged for periods of five minutes at a time. Attempting to run it for longer or activating it twice in a thirty-minute period results in it automatically shutting down for an hour to allow the system to cool.

**Mods:** 1; **Cost:** C\$5K × Size

### JUNGLE PENETRATOR

The thick, triple-canopies of Leviathan's jungles make it nearly impossible for aircraft to deliver or pick up passengers from within them. A jungle penetrator is a heavy, anchor-like seat attached to a vehicle's winch that relies on its weight to break through foliage and allow it to reach the ground. Up to two passengers can ride a penetrator at a time.

A jungle penetrator weighs 25 lbs. These are standard equipment on JumpCorp's search-and-rescue hoppers. This modification does not include the winch (see below).

**Mods:** 0; **Cost:** C\$1K

### REPELLER FIELD

This modification provides the passenger compartments of a vehicle with a large field similar to that created by personal repellers (see page 8). While it provides no protection from the elements or attack, it does prevent Leviathan's numerous pests and flying parasites from torturing the passengers while inside the vehicle. This negates the requirement for Vigor rolls to resist the effects of **Pests and Parasites** (see page 21).

For relatively obvious reasons, this mod is usually only applied to vehicles that have exposed crews.

**Mods:** 1; **Cost:** C\$5K

### WINCH

This accessory is commonly found on rescue aircraft and occasionally on those that make supply runs to and from remote locales with no landing facilities. It includes a power winch with a lift capacity of 1,000 lb., and both a lifting hook and a basket suitable for loading loose material or up to two passengers.

Winch-equipped air vehicles on Leviathan are usually also equipped with a jungle penetrator attachment as well (see above).

**Mods:** 1; **Cost:** C\$10K



## COMMON VEHICLES

## AIRBOAT

These flat-bottom boats are used in the rivers, swamps, and wetlands, where their shallow draft allows them to go places more conventional craft would bottom out. They are powered by one or more huge fans mounted on the rear and steered with rudders that redirect the fans' airflow.

Airboats are most commonly employed by independent guides or small tour agencies that can't afford the larger investment a skimmer represents. Unlike skimmers, airboats are limited to water and don't employ repellers, so passengers have to fend for themselves with regards to biting or parasitic pests.

**Medium Vehicle:** Size 3, Acc/TS 11/23, Toughness 12 (3), Crew 1+7, Cost C\$11K, Remaining Mods 3

**Notes:** 4× Cargo Compartments, Crew Space, Exposed Crew, 2× Speed, Watercraft

## CRAWLER

The crawler is the workhorse for colonists and corporations alike on Leviathan. Its tracked chassis allows it to navigate every type of terrain except rock faces, and it's amphibious as well. Although considerably slower than a skimmer, most serious explorers and hunting groups rely on these lumbering personnel carriers, as they're capable of penetrating the jungles and carrying enough supplies for extended trips into the wilds. Many crawlers are also outfitted with living space or luxury features, depending on their owners' wishes.

From experience, settlers and guides planetside have learned to heavily reinforce these vehicles, as many lacerauns see them as rival animals and attack. Stunner matrices are also standard equipment on all crawlers, to dissuade the more persistent dinos from continuing an assault.

**Heavy Vehicle:** Size 6, Acc/TS 3/10, Toughness 26 (5), Crew 1+11, Cost C\$91K, Remaining Mods 4

**Notes:** Amphibious, 10× Cargo Compartments, Crew Space, Electrified Hull, 3× Reinforced Chassis, Tracked

## HOPPER

This Vertical Take Off and Landing (VTOL) aircraft is the go-to vehicle for JumpCorp rescue and security ops on Leviathan, as well as simple passenger transport duties. Vestal maintains a small fleet, and most other corporations operating planetside have at least a few. It is the fastest way to get around Leviathan, with the added advantage of keeping its passengers out of the reach of all but a few of the planet's predators.

Hoppers are not capable of leaving orbit and have a functional ceiling of about 35,000 feet. The stats below are for the more common utility versions of these aircraft. Corporate transports often include luxury features. Search-and-rescue craft are commonly equipped with winches and jungle penetrators, as well as advanced medical equipment.

**Large Vehicle:** Size 4, Acc/TS 50/600, Toughness 15 (4), Crew 1+9, Cost C\$143K, Remaining Mods 7

**Notes:** Jet (VTOL, Climb 2), Autopilot, 6× Cargo Compartments, Crew Space, Sensor Suite

## SKIMMER

These hover vehicles are popular with tour agencies for excursions in the plains and wetlands. They're more rugged than similar models on civilized worlds, at a small cost in speed—and a larger one to the bank account. Their ability to cross most open terrain while still making good time makes them ideal for private tours or short hunting trips.

Skimmers are outfitted with larger versions of personal repellers, so their passengers can ride in the open air without dealing with the hordes of airborne pests common to the planet. The tour agencies sell this as a bonus, marketing it as "roughing it."

**Medium Vehicle:** Size 3, Acc/TS 10/45, Toughness 14 (5), Crew 1+7, Cost C\$34K, Remaining Mods 0

**Notes:** Armor, Exposed Crew, 2× Cargo Compartments, Crew Space, Hover Vehicle, Repeller Field, 2× Speed







# CHAPTER THREE: LEVIATHAN

The planet Leviathan is located in the system formerly known as Sigma Hydrae. The star system was discovered long ago by Earth astronomers, but it was so far from other settled worlds and established trade routes that no one invested much effort in researching its planets for colonization potential. Neither were the worlds of the other sentient races within reasonable travel distance from Sigma Hydrae. In short, it is best described as on the very fringe of the Known Worlds.

About 20 years ago, a scouting expedition sponsored by Vestal Interplanetary, a largely entertainment-oriented corporation, reached Sigma Hydrae. The team quickly identified Sigma Hydrae II as an M-type planet and suitable for colonization. In the past, Vestal has always auctioned off rights to any system of this sort to the highest bidder, but its board realized immediately that Sigma Hydrae was simply too far off the beaten track to be a reliable draw for settlement.

## DINOSAUR PLANET

After confirming there was no intelligent life, Vestal's expedition made planetfall. The plan was to run more thorough surveys of mineral and other natural resources hoping to sweeten the pot for potential investors. That's when the team discovered something really interesting.

Sigma Hydrae II was home to dinosaurs.

The planet's indigenous life forms weren't actually dinosaurs, of course. Earth's prehistoric monsters didn't have six legs or six eyes, but lacerauns were the closest thing mankind or any other sentient race had found in the galaxy: hordes of giant, scaly beasts that shook the ground when they walked.

Seeing a potential gold mine, Vestal staked its official claim to the system and commenced developing several tourist-oriented settlements. It began a marketing barrage to sell the newly renamed planet Leviathan as a unique destination, where the discerning traveler could

view—or hunt—unique, enormous beasts during the day, while enjoying 5-star accommodations at night.

## THE SIGMA HYDRAE SYSTEM

After settling on Leviathan as a name for its new planetary endeavor, Vestal opted to keep the theme for the rest of the astronomical bodies in the Sigma Hydrae system. The company renamed Sigma Hydrae, Tiamat, after the many-headed dragon god of ancient Babylon.

It is a K-type main sequence star, sometimes referred to as an orange dwarf. It is slightly smaller than Earth's sun, but possesses a sizeable habitable zone. Tiamat is older than the sun, but as an orange dwarf, has a much longer period of stability. These factors combine to make Leviathan a near-perfect environment in which life could develop.

Spectrographic surveys reveal Tiamat is a mineral-rich star, but it has only two rocky satellites. There are an additional two gas giant planets in stable orbits. An asteroid belt occupies the second orbital period, between the two rocky planets, Jonah and Typhon. Leviathan is dealt with in more detail later, but a brief overview of the rest of the system is provided below.

## JONAH (SIGMA HYDRAE I)

This tiny world orbits Sigma Hydrae at a distance of 45,000,000 miles. Jonah is roughly the size of Earth's moon, with a diameter of approximately 2,000 miles. The smallest planet in the system takes its name from the Biblical prophet who was swallowed by a great fish—which, according to mythology, barely avoided being swallowed by the legendary Leviathan in turn.

Although it is not tidally locked with its star, its rotation cycle is very slow, and each day is nearly 46 hours long. Jonah is a barren planet, with no atmosphere or water. It has an abundance of



heavy metals, as its gravity is nearly 0.5g. While this classifies it as a low-gravity world for game effects, it is unusually high for such a small planet and likely a result of high density.

The lack of atmosphere is also responsible for extreme temperature ranges on the planet. The surface temperature on Jonah can reach upwards of 400°F at the equator, with -230°F being the average at night.

## THE OUROBOROS RING

The Ouroboros Ring is an asteroid field occupying an orbit between Leviathan and Typhon. It circles Tiamat, mimicking the ancient symbol of a serpent devouring its own tail.

The ring is relatively thin and sparsely populated, leading some astronomers to posit that the debris lacked enough mass to coalesce into a planetoid. A region of the belt, called the Worm's Eye, where the asteroids are more concentrated, seems to lend credence to this theory.

The largest of the field's asteroids is several miles in diameter, massive enough to pose a planet-killer threat were it to stray into Leviathan's orbit. However, all asteroids of that size that Vestal has detected are within the Worm's Eye. The combined gravitational fields of the component asteroids seem sufficient to hold them in relatively stable locations.

The asteroids of the Ring travel in a clockwise orbit around Tiamat, opposite the direction of the star's other satellites. As yet, there is no universally accepted explanation for this anomaly.

## TYPHON (SIGMA HYDRAE III)

Tiamat's third planet, Typhon, is the largest body in the star system. The massive, uniformly orange-hued planet is named for Typhon, the father of all monsters in Greek mythology, who was said to be as tall as the stars, with a hundred dragon heads emerging from his neck.

Typhon is a gas giant, with a mass of roughly 95 times that of Leviathan (or Earth). It is composed almost entirely of hydrogen and helium. Starships reliant on hydrogen or helium reactors can refuel from Typhon's atmosphere, provided they have the necessary equipment to do so—usually a hydrogen/helium skimmer or scoop.

There is considerable distance between its orbit and that of Leviathan, with Typhon circling approximately 1.5 billion miles from the star. With the exception of the Ouroboros Ring, no

astronomical body of any appreciable size has been identified in a regular orbit between Sigma Hydrae II and III.

Astronomers have identified five permanent moons. The unnamed moons are composed of rock and/or ice, and initial surveys indicate they are barren.

## ECHIDNA (SIGMA HYDRAE IV)

Echidna, an ice giant, is the furthest planet from Tiamat, with an orbital radius of about 2.5 billion miles. Echidna was the wife of Typhon, with a serpent's body, but the face of a beautiful nymph. Fittingly, Echidna is the most beautiful planet in the system, at least viewed from space. Its surface is covered by an atmosphere shaded alternating bands of emerald, violet, and cerulean, all rotating independently of the others.

Beneath the colorful cloud cover, it is as poisonous as its namesake. Unlike its larger sibling, Typhon, Echidna is composed of a mix of ammonia and methane, along with traces of water and hydrocarbons. It is smaller, but denser than Typhon, with less than one-eighth the diameter of the gas giant, but almost one-fifth the mass.

As the outer guardian to the star system, Echidna seems to attract a considerable amount of stellar flotsam before it reaches the inner planets. Echidna has thirteen moons of various sizes and composition, as well as a small series of rings.

## A VISITOR'S GUIDE

The planet is remarkably similar to a prehistoric Earth. Leviathan orbits Tiamat inside the habitable, or Goldilocks, zone. Leviathan is closer to its star than Earth is, orbiting at approximately 69,000,000 miles. Although Tiamat emits less energy, this proximity still results in a slightly warmer temperature overall, but still well within tolerable limits for visitors who are properly prepared. Daytime temperatures on the planet average around 90°F.

There are three continents on the planet, and approximately 60% of Leviathan is covered by water. Most of that is found in the Capacian Sea, which surrounds the planet's landmasses. A second, shallow body of water, the Sea of Fire, lies between the three continents.

## CLIMATE

Leviathan has less of an axial tilt than Earth as well, which means the seasonal changes on the planet aren't as noticeable. Leviathan has



effectively three seasons—summer, spring, and fall. This also means the polar regions don't receive as great a thaw, resulting in larger ice caps and considerably colder temperatures in those areas. To date, no surface life forms have been discovered on the thick ice packs that cover both poles.

The warmer temperatures, higher relative humidity, and climate variations causes more frequent formation of hurricanes. Those occurring in the Capacian Sea are the strongest, but frequently travel along northerly tracks and never make landfall before losing strength in the colder latitudes. Weaker storms form in the Sea of Fire, most often in the south eastern expanse where there are less land masses to break up the winds. These hurricanes invariably make landfall, usually on Vesta.

## FLORA AND FAUNA

Most visitors are struck by the vast array of color displayed by plant life on Leviathan. Unlike that found on most other planets, plant pigmentation ranges across the entire spectrum. While green is the median color, most grasses favor red or orange, while plants found on the lower levels of Leviathan's multi-canopied jungles tend toward violets and purples. This color difference is a result of a number of factors, including the lack of a true winter, the relative amount of light available to a given specimen, and the spectrum variation due to Tiamat's status as a K-sequence star.

The main draw for most visitors to Leviathan is the gigantic lacerauns—the so-called “dinosaurs” Vestal uses to promote tourism to this otherwise-empty corner of the universe. Lacerauns do resemble terrestrial dinosaurs in many ways: They're large and share many similarities with Earth reptiles, including scaly skin and claws.

However, these enormous beasts have six limbs instead of four and a like number of eyes. Xenobiologists theorize these creatures evolved from bottom-feeding fish analogues similar to those found in the Sea of Fire. Locals still refer to them as “dinos,” although many specify “biters” when speaking about predatory lacerauns and “grass-eaters” for herbivores.

The other main ambulatory life forms on the planet are colemata, called “bugs” by Leviathan's colonists. These creatures are characterized by their hydrostatic skeletons—they use a complex

system of muscles and valves to regulate fluid pressure in their body, much like Earth octopuses do. These fluids can provide them with rigid structures that serve a similar function to bones or exoskeletons in other creatures. On land, most colemata are relatively small, no larger than man-sized, but in the planet's oceans they can reach much greater masses.

## SETTLING PREHISTORY

Unlike the approach taken on most settled habitable worlds, Vestal put little initial effort into making Leviathan self-sufficient. Beyond the minimal industrial development necessary to erect and maintain the high-end hotels, casinos, and other entertainment venues, the majority of all endeavors on the planet are oriented toward the service industry. Only now, more than a decade after the initial ground breaking for the primary settlement of Ralston began, are the first sustainable farms springing up around the capital.

This is by design, as Vestal has no desire to encroach on the wilds of Leviathan any more than absolutely necessary to sustain the few small towns it has established. However, this minimalist approach hasn't drawn accolades from environmental groups, as it's not driven by any true respect for the world or its inhabitants.





## LAW ON LEVIATHAN

The legal code on Leviathan is a rather generic one, based on similar ones found on dozens of civilized planets. Minor infractions like disorderly conduct or vandalism are usually addressed on planet through fines or time served with work gangs. More serious criminals, such as those accused of major theft, assault, or murder, are sent out of the system to be tried in courts on established planets. There are no prisons on Leviathan—only temporary holding cells—so guilty parties serve any sentences off-planet.

Vestal being a relatively small, consumer-oriented corporation, it lacks a security arm of its own. As such, it employs JumpSec contractors to enforce the law in the system. Vestal's operating budget is a little light in the security and law enforcement category. There are about 500 JumpSec security officers planetside and they answer—at least on paper—to the Vestal hierarchy.

Within the primary settlements, the JumpSec officers keep a tight rein on misconduct, and these are generally models of civilized behavior as a result. In the vast back country though, there is effectively no enforcement of planetary law, or at least not in any timely fashion. Although little crime is reported in wilderness areas, Leviathan is a very dangerous place. Hunting accidents are difficult to investigate, and it's not unheard of for an entire expedition to simply disappear into the jungles. Dead men make terrible witnesses—especially if they've been already eaten by an a-pex.

System space is patrolled by three space fighters, and a single system freighter provides search-and-rescue off-planet. Fortunately, the Sigma Hydrae system is far enough from most charted trade routes that piracy has not been a problem.

Rather, it's a matter of simple corporate math: the less wilderness remaining on the planet, the fewer star attractions the environment can support—and the fewer hunting permits it can sell.

## GAZETTEER

## VESTA

Vesta is by far the largest continent on the planet. It contains more than twice the area of the other two continents combined. The entirety of Earth's Eurasian landmass could fit within the boundaries of Vesta with ample room to spare. Not surprisingly, it contains a wide diversity of terrain, from vast plains to an enormous central rainforest to several mountain ranges.

Much of the temperate latitudes are covered by rainforests. The dense jungles crowd the shores of the Sea of Fire, making land travel a daunting endeavor. The jungles are home to an incredibly diverse ecosystem, but few visitors to the planet travel more than a day or two into them, both due to the dangerous life forms lurking within and the sheer difficulty of breaking trail in the thick vegetation. The Great Eastern Plain, on the far side of the rainforests, is more popular, at least among tourists interested in laceraun watching or hunting.

Ralston, named for the CEO of Vestal, is the center of planetary operations and only spaceport. It sits in the southern portion of the continent on the shores of the Sea of Fire. The other major settlement on the continent, Burroughs, lies on the far northeastern coast of the Capacian Sea.

In addition to the two tourist destinations, a small number of tiny, little-known communities are scattered across Vesta. Most of these are simply collections of buildings where the few permit-owning colonists have been allowed to settle. Some are remnants from the early years of development when construction crews were harvesting materials to build the permanent settlements, and a few are little more than temporary living accommodations for researchers in outlying regions.

**Burroughs:** This settlement lies on the eastern coast of Vesta, where the Great Northern Plain meets the Capacian Sea. The architecture is deliberately rustic, with many of the structures built out of actual logs shipped hundreds or even thousands of miles. Although there are several hotels—called hunting lodges in Burroughs—and



a variety of restaurants serving local delicacies, there are none of the casinos or theaters found back in the capital.

**Dragon's Throat:** The strait between Vesta and Altia to the south, this stretch of water connects the Sea of Fire to the Capacian Sea to the west. It takes its name from the numerous volcanic islands found in its confines, more than handful of which are active.

**The Fall:** The Fall is one of Leviathan's many natural wonders. It marks the edge of two tectonic plates that suffered a tremendous upheaval at some point in the distant past. South of the Fall, the land is sometimes hundreds or even a thousand feet lower than the northern side.

A broken mountain range marks the northern edge of the Fall, which causes the precipitous drop to the south to seem even larger. The portion of continent below the fall is populated by a wide range of species, including several which are otherwise only found on Borea, including the predatory and highly dangerous ravagers. The Fall itself is home to one of the greatest concentrations of drakes on Vesta and a popular destination for hunters traveling south from Burroughs.

**Great Eastern Plain:** This massive expanse of grassland reaches virtually unbroken from the Fall to the northern shores of the continent. It is home to countless numbers of lacerauns, from herds of relatively passive herbivores to the gigantic a-pexes that prey on them. Tornado swarms—sudden violent storms spawning dozens of twisters—spring up suddenly on the plains, threatening any creature caught in the open.

In spite of the dangers, most hunting guides prefer to take their customers here, as it's safer for the tenderfeet on the open plain. There, you can often see the giant, flesh-eaters with plenty of time to react. In the jungles, sharp, pointy death might be hiding behind the next tree...or in it!

**Ralston:** This is the only community on Vesta that might be described by the term "city," and even then, it's a fairly small one. Filled to capacity, Ralston is home to about 25,000 individuals, but less than half of those are permanent residents. The rest are tourists, scientific researchers, or corporate reps on short-term visits to Leviathan.

Most of the city's industry is focused on service and entertainment. There are dozens of high-end luxury hotels, casinos, theaters, and restaurants. The options available to visitors are staggering,





and few leave the planet unimpressed. The lacerauns might be an attraction for many, but Vestal Interplanetary went to great lengths to make sure that even those who have no interest in seeing giant lizards leave Leviathan in a good mood.

**Stygian Deep:** The rainforest that rings most of the coast of the Sea of Fire is named for the largest river on the planet, the Styx. While the largest trees rise to over 200 feet tall, most wildlife inhabits either the floor or the lowest layer of tree cover. The most common method of travel is along the Styx River. The river empties into the Sea of Fire via the massive Stygian Delta a couple of hundred miles from Ralston.

## BOREA

Borea is the smallest of Leviathan's three landmasses. It also is the lowest lying of them, with much of its area only a few feet or so above sea level. In fact, a significant portion of the continent is marsh or swampland, and the Amymonian Delta, where a confluence of most of Borea's major rivers feeds into the Sluice, is so low that nearly half of the water in its swamps is salt water.

The presence of what many off-world hunters consider tougher game draws the more experienced (or foolhardy) to Borea. Some of the smaller guide companies specialize solely in expeditions to the smaller continent, charging a premium for the service, of course. However, other than dedicated sportsmen, few tourists otherwise visit Borea, as it is the most inhospitable of the available destinations on Leviathan.

**Moorland:** Moorland is the primary population center on Borea, and the only one accessible to most off-world visitors. It is much smaller than any of the other Vestal settlements, with less than 1,000 people present even during peak times. Moorland is also far less lavishly appointed; all construction is of modular design and assembled from pre-fabricated, polymer-based materials.

Nonetheless, Moorland also represents one of the larger expenditures for Vestal on Leviathan. The local terrain and fauna requires that the settlement be elevated dozens of feet above ground, and to do so, Vestal built it on a large platform that is held aloft by several massive antigravity generators. Its construction alone makes the remote town a popular location for sightseers.

**Amymonian Delta:** The Amymonian Delta encompasses nearly 300,000 square miles. That's big enough area in which to lose even a herd of behemoths. The swampland isn't as heavily forested as the Stygian Deep or other jungles on the planet, but it has plenty of thick patches where the ground is solid enough. The great expanses of water allow kroks—even the giant variety—to move pretty far inland, which can make a simple boating trip into a life-or-death activity.

The few tours of the region are usually conducted from a comfortable altitude in hoppers for that reason. In general, only the most dedicated laceraun hunters venture into the Delta at ground level, most often using airboats or skimmers.

**Schlacter Foundation Research Facility:** The Schlacter Foundation facility is the only other settlement of any appreciable size on Borea. Schlacter is the forerunner in the study of the development of Leviathan's unique life forms. Known for its groundbreaking work in psionic grafting and enhancement, Schlacter has stated it hopes to use the knowledge gained from that research in ways to benefit a variety of scientific disciplines throughout Known Worlds.

## ALTIA

Altia lies to the southwest of the Sea of Fire. Close to the coast of the Sea of Fire, the continent is heavily forested, much like its sister landmasses. Inland, the land uniformly rises to the south and west, eventually reaching the Thule Mountains that ring the entire southern edge of the continent. Beyond the mountains, it falls away, often in sheer cliffs hundreds or even thousands of feet tall, into the southern reaches of the Capacian Sea.

The lowlands are covered with jungles typical to the temperate latitudes on Leviathan. The nearer to the Sea of Fire, the denser these grow. As the vegetation ascends on the southwesterly slopes, it thins and presents the closest analog to a deciduous forest found on the planet. However, instead of leaves changing with the seasons, it's the bark of the trees that vary. The trees in this region secrete sap that hardens over an annual period, giving the bark an increasingly glossy and reddish or orange sheen. As the solar orbit completes, the outer bark sloughs off, exposing a new, greenish layer, and the cycle begins anew.

Altia's wildlife shares more with that of Vesta than its eastern neighbor Borea. There are fewer



representatives of the largest species, like the a-pex or behemoth, mainly because there is simply less terrain suited to them. However, scute boars are quite common in the thinner deciduous forests and the Thule Mountains are home to the largest population of drakes on the planet. Hunting permits on Altia are more strictly regulated by the Wildlife Department, so most drake hunting expeditions take place at the Fall on Vesta.

**Evanescence Falls:** Named for the only major river that flows south from the Thule Mountains, the Falls plummet over 2,000 feet from the top of a cliff into the southern Capacian Sea. The water actually vaporizes before reaching the ocean, leaving only a slight mist to settle on its surface. Swimming is prohibited though, as waters of the Capacian are too cold to comfortably swim in, and drakes on the cliffs above might mistake a swimmer for a potential meal.

**Precipice:** Located at the edge of a 2,500-foot-tall cliff, Precipice is the only population center of any size on Altia. Even so, at capacity, it houses fewer than 5,000 visitors and employees. Its primary attraction is the view of Evanescence Falls and the Capacian Sea, which crashes against the cliffs nearly half a mile below, as well as the sight of drakes plummeting hundreds of feet to pounce on prey in the waters below.

Several of the hotels and eating establishments actually extend over the cliff edge, allowing their customers to sleep or dine above the waves. Transparent polymer floors enhance the vertiginous experience for the truly daring. A glass elevator provides the residents of nearby Precipice with access to the bottom of the falls, where Vestal has thoughtfully constructed an artificial beach.

**Thule Mountains:** This is the longest continuous and highest mountain range on the planet. Some of that comes by virtue of the bases of some of the mountains begin nearly 2,000 feet above sea level, but a few of the peaks surpass 17,000 feet, making them respectable in their own right. Although drakes inhabit the lower reaches of the mountains, above the treeline (about 10,000 feet), there are no predatory species.

## BODIES OF WATER

There are two major bodies of salt water on Leviathan. Although both are referred to as seas in the company marketing literature, the two bodies are strictly speaking oceans.

As Leviathan lacks a moon, the only tidal effects on the planet are solar. This means low tides occur during daytime hours, and high tides roll in after dark. However, the tides on Leviathan are very shallow, seldom exceeding a few feet of difference.

## SEA OF FIRE

This shallow salt-water expanse lies in the center of the planet's three main landmasses. The sea gets its name from the large numbers of volcanic islands found there, and many of them are active. This is due to the meeting of at least three tectonic plates under the water, causing considerable geological activity in the area.

Planetary geologists believe the Sea of Fire may have at one time been a low plain that was flooded within the last few million years. The water never exceeds more than a couple of hundred feet of depth, and in many places, even in expanses of open water near the center of the ocean, may be as shallow as 10 feet or less. This can make navigating the Sea of Fire in a large watercraft particularly challenging without good instruments or charts.

The Sea of Fire spawns frequent tropical storms. The shallow water prevents these from reaching true hurricane strength except in rare occasions, but the heavy wind and rain from the storms that do occur always eventually make landfall somewhere, most often on eastern Vesta or Borea.

## CAPACIAN SEA

The Capacian Sea is the name given to the rest of open water surrounding the planet's continents. More than one-half of the planet's surface is made up of salt water, and the Capacian accounts for the majority of that. From the shores of western Vesta around to Burroughs in the east, the Capacian stretches over 15,000 miles.

It is also considerably deeper than the smaller Sea of Fire. The Capacian Sea is a true blue water ocean, with depths recorded in excess of a mile in some areas, with greater depths predicted by many oceanographers. Much of the ocean is completely unexplored, except for satellite photography.

Other than a few sport-fishing expeditions from Burroughs, there has been little development devoted to the vast ocean. A few marine research facilities have been erected, mostly along the eastern shore of Vesta, but thus far Vestal has done little to market the planet's aquatic side.







# CHAPTER FOUR: LEVIATHAN'S SOFT UNDERBELLY

*If you're a player, read no further. Everything from here on out is solely the province of the Game Master.*

In this chapter, you're going to find all the behind-the-scenes information about Leviathan and the Tiamat system. We'll give you the full rundown on any important locations and groups, as well as the relevant encounter tables for each major region.

## SETTING RULES

Here is a brief rundown on the Setting Rules and hazards spacers must deal with while adventuring on Leviathan. There are a few complications that come with living on a planet populated by gigantic, pseudo-reptilian monsters though, as you might expect.

## FOOD AND WATER

The chemistry of life on Leviathan is very close to that of every other major sentient race. This means fresh water found on the planet is drinkable, and for the most part, an explorer can scrape out enough sustenance from the local flora and fauna to survive. It's not an exact match, however, so adventurers caught in a survival situation have a little tougher time of it than they might on their own home worlds. And that's not counting dodging beasts capable of gobbling down the average explorer with a bite or two.

Not everything on the planet is edible to off-worlders and finding those choice bits takes a little more work. Survival rolls to locate food and drink suffer a -1 penalty.

Worse, most of the fresh water on Leviathan carries microbes that do not agree with non-natives' digestive tracts. These can be removed with filtration systems or by boiling. Any time a spacer drinks untreated water he must make a Vigor roll. Failure means the spacer contracts a mild case of dyspepsia and suffers a Fatigue level. Fatigue accumulated in this manner is recovered at the rate of one level per day of rest, and Exhausted is the maximum level that can be gained.

## PESTS AND PARASITES

Leviathan's equivalent of mosquitoes and other biting or blood-sucking insects are sized to feed on what are effectively dinosaurs. When one or more of those creatures latches onto an off-worlder, it's less of a nuisance and more of a life-endangering situation. These pests infest virtually every environment on the planet except open water and the higher elevations found in mountain ranges.

Unprotected travelers must make a Vigor roll each day or suffer a Fatigue level from the accumulated bites and blood loss caused by the planet's "bugs." This Fatigue can cause Incapacitation but not death and recovers at the rate of one level per day, once no longer exposed to the parasites. Adventurers wearing personal repellers are immune to this hazard.

The only potential upside is that, lacking a hard exoskeleton, colemata tend to burst with a more satisfying pop when smacked.

## HAZARDS

Leviathan is virtually untamed. Beyond the more mundane aspects of survival, like food and drink, there are also some far more overt threats to adventurers from the environment itself.

## AVALANCHE

Along the Fall and in the Thule Mountains, avalanches are not entirely uncommon. Whether they're composed of rocks or snow depends on the elevation, time of year, and similar factors; but regardless, they pose a serious danger to any group unlucky enough to experience one.

Any hero caught in an avalanche must make an Agility roll at a -2 penalty. On a success, the nimble explorer manages to get out of the way of the slide, find a rare bit of sheltering terrain, or otherwise avoid the landslide. On a failure, she is swept up in the avalanche, traveling 10+2d10" along its path, and suffer 1d6 damage for each 5" traveled (round up). For example, a traveler who is carried 19" would take 3d6 damage.



An adventurer unlucky enough to get a critical failure on her Agility roll travels twice the normal distance.

It's not all roses once the tumbling stops, either. Any spacer failing her Agility roll must also make a Survival roll at the end of the avalanche or be buried 1d6" deep in the debris. She can make a Strength or Survival roll each round to pull herself ½" closer to the surface, assuming she is conscious. Every five rounds she remains buried, she suffers a level of Fatigue due to suffocation. Treat this as Drowning (see **Hazards** in *Savage Worlds* for details) for both recovery and Incapacitation effects.

A trapped spacer's companions can also dig down to her at a rate of 1" per two rounds, assuming they have a way to identify her location.

## MELTING PIT

The vast deltas and swamps are home to many large beasts, but they also hold this less visible danger. Melting pits are areas where the vegetation has collapsed under its own weight and is decomposing into an almost-liquid mass of organic material. They are almost undetectable due to the fact the uppermost reaches of the melting pit appears to be nothing more than ground foliage.

If the explorers encounter a melting pit, allow the hero in the lead to make a Notice or Survival roll at a -2 penalty to spot the treacherous ground ahead. If he fails, he finds the mire the hard way—by stepping in it!

Any hero stuck in a melting pit sinks in three rounds unless extracted. A trapped traveler can make a Strength roll at a -4 penalty each round. A success means he's stopped himself from sinking further, while a raise indicates he was lucky enough to grab hold of something substantial and actually pull himself out. On a critical failure, his thrashing has made his situation much, much worse, and he is sucked under. The spacer begins Drowning immediately (see **Hazards** in *Savage Worlds*).

Other spacers can drag the victim out by making a Strength roll. A simple success pulls the trapped adventurer out, but a critical failure results in the good Samaritans being pulled in as well. Of course, if the victim has already sank beneath the surface, any would-be rescuers must find him first by making a Notice roll at a -2 penalty.

## TORNADO SWARM

These compact, violent storms spring up suddenly on the Great Northern Plain. On average, they are less than a dozen miles across but may spawn more than one twister per square mile beneath its towering thunderheads. The tornados aren't the only threat these sprawling thunderstorms contain, as powerful lightning strikes capable of downing the largest lacerauns occur with frightening frequency. Thanks to their sensitivity to electrical fields, lacerauns seem able to sense tornado swarms even before they form, giving them time to either flee the area or at least find cover. Unfortunately, off-worlders don't have the same ability.

A tornado swarm lasts 1-2 hours, either dissipating or moving out of the area. Any creature caught in the open during that time suffers 2d6 damage every 5 minutes from the high winds and flying debris. Additionally, an exposed hero must draw a card. On a Joker, she is struck by lightning for 3d12 damage. Reshuffle the deck after each draw.

Cover acts as Armor against this damage, but the vicious winds tear apart tents and other light constructions. Only permanent structures, enclosed vehicles, and the like provide complete protection from the storm.

## TROPICAL STORM

Around the Sea of Fire, strong, tropical storms are a fairly common occurrence. At sea, the combination of wind, waves, and limited visibility can be disastrous for watercraft. A typical storm lasts for 2d6 hours.

The shallow water found in many areas of the Sea of Fire means sometimes wave troughs can extend down to the very sandy bottom of the expanse. For each hour the boat is subjected to the battering one of these storms inflicts, the pilot must make a Boating roll. Failure means the craft suffers 2d6 damage. On a critical failure, the damage is 4d6.

Additionally, ball lightning is a frequent occurrence during one of these storms. It is only encountered at sea, and xenometeorologists have not yet determined its cause. The most widely accepted theories both suggest it is some form of aerosolized matter held together by a powerful electrical charge, either silicates from the seawater or the macrobiotics that give the sea its characteristic coloration.



Regardless, the anomalies pack a serious wallop. Each hour a spacer is exposed to the elements during a storm in a waterborne craft, she must draw a card from the Action Deck. On a Joker, she has a close encounter with one of these charged spheres and must make an Agility roll. If she fails, she is shocked, suffering 3d6 damage.

While these don't often pose as direct a threat to life or limb to characters on land, they do significantly impair most activities for their duration. Thanks to the cloud cover and driving rain, even in daytime visibility is limited to 12". Most Agility- or Strength-based Trait rolls suffer a -2 penalty due to lashing rain and strong winds. Mud and slick surfaces reduce all Paces by 2, and any hero trying to run in these conditions must make an Agility roll or fall prone and become Shaken.

On top of the game effects, these storms can also cause flash flooding, lightning strikes, and similar events.

## THE TIAMAT SYSTEM

Most of the action in the Sigma Hydrae system happens on Leviathan itself. After all, why would an adventurer go to a planet filled with dinosaurs and then spend all her time flying around empty space? However, there are a few unanswered questions about the system that might prove of interest to the more scientifically minded in a space crew.

### JONAH

The reason for Jonah's relatively high gravity is an abundance of rare and heavy metals. It is actually a chthonian planet—that is a former gas giant that has had its atmosphere stripped away by proximity to a star—in this case, Tiamat.

Vestal has not explored possible mining operations on Jonah. In fact, accurate assessments of mineral resources at that scale are outside the corporation's capacity and, more importantly, even its consideration.

Enticing an industrial or mining firm to conduct such a survey would undoubtedly bring at least some offers to lease operations on the planet. Such an agreement would be very beneficial to Vestal's bottom line with regard to Leviathan, but thus far, the potential has largely gone unnoticed by the corporate hierarchy.

## THE OUROBOROS RING

To date, the true nature of the Ouroboros Ring remains undiscovered by scientists. It is actually composed of the remnants of Leviathan's former moon and the planetoid that tore it from orbit. The planetoid, entering from outside the star system, passed between Leviathan and its former moon. The event touched off massive geological upheaval on Leviathan and pulled the moon from its orbit. These cataclysmic events are also part of the reason development of life on Leviathan lagged behind Earth, despite its greater age.

The planetoid, however, lacked sufficient mass to keep the moon for its own. The moon, its velocity altered by the rogue, pulled free of Leviathan's gravity well. The rogue planetoid continued spiraling outward in a widening elliptical orbit between Typhon and Leviathan.

Leviathan's former moon collided with the rogue planetoid as the moon crossed its new orbit. The impact was cataclysmic, shattering both celestial objects. The majority of the mass of the two bodies settled into the current Ring, with the remaining asteroids slowly being distributed around the entire orbital path.

Any detailed examination of the Ouroboros Belt eventually uncovers the existence of two distinct types of asteroids—those from Leviathan's moon and those from the rogue. The elemental composition found in the rogue planetoid's remains differ greatly from the rest of the rocky objects in the system, strongly indicating an outside origin.

**The Worm's Eye:** The largest concentration, the Worm's Eye, roughly corresponds to the cores of the two original objects. The combined gravity of the various asteroids works to keep the largest remnants in an area roughly twice the size of Earth's moon. Some of the asteroids there are hundreds of square miles in area, and others barely measure a few yards from end to end.

Navigating inside the Worm's Eye is tricky to say the least, due to the dense concentration of astronomical bodies. Every five rounds inside the Eye, the ship's pilot must make a Piloting roll. On a failure, his vessel is struck by passing debris for 3d6 damage. With a critical failure, the ship takes 6d6 instead.



## TYPHON

Typhon itself is a typical gas giant, if a little on the smaller side. Any solid surface hides so far below the swirling atmosphere that it's effectively unreachable by current manned vessels. One of Typhon's moons serves as a dead-drop for a band of interplanetary drug smugglers. More details on this can be found in the Savage Tale **Mission of Mercy** (page 69).

## ECHNIDA

Like Typhon, Echnida itself has little to offer except an interesting sight as it passes a view screen. On the other hand, it is sort of the trash collector of the Tiamat system, or at least trash from elsewhere. The planet is surrounded by over a dozen moons and many smaller bodies, and almost all of them were pulled into the planet's orbit as they entered the system. Most are lifeless balls of rock or ice, and although there are several that have traveled thousands of light years to reach Tiamat.

# LEVIATHAN

Leviathan is home to a wide variety of terrain, ranging from dense jungles to scablands or alpine mountains. Because the major landmasses are all in fairly close proximity to each other, a visitor can make the journey from one extreme to another rather quickly even with the non-existent planetary infrastructure, often in less than a day's travel.

## DATAFILE: LEVIATHAN (SIGMA HYDRAE II)

**Gravity:** Normal

**Dominant Terrain:** Jungle

**Atmosphere:** Normal

**Population Density:** Extremely sparse

**Government:** Company/Corporate (Vestal/JumpCorp)

**Dominant Law:** Lenient

**Customs:** No indigenous culture

**Spaceport:** Ralston (Basic)

**Technology:** Average

## ENCOUNTERS

Each major planetary region has its own table to represent the various creatures, hazards, or things the adventurers may encounter there. Unless otherwise indicated in the area's description, roll on the appropriate table for that region once each day and again each night that a band of explorers spends in a given area. There's no specific time you need to roll for the encounter, so feel free to stage any that occur at the best point during that general timeframe for your own purposes.

**A-pex (page 80):** Roll 1d6: On a 1–2, the carnivore has either just taken down an animal itself or stolen a kill from another laceraun and ignores the party unless disturbed; on a 3–4, it has fed recently and doesn't pursue the group unless they provoke it; on a 5–6, the heroes just ended up on the menu and it attacks!

**Angler (page 81):** During daylight hours, allow the heroes to make Notice rolls (–4) to spot the dangling lines. Each character who fails and is not in an enclosed vehicle must make an Agility roll or run into a colemata's tongue. At night, the creatures can either ambush a mobile party as above (with an additional penalty to the Notice roll for lighting), or clamber into the canopy above them after they set camp.

**Anklebiters (page 81):** Roll 1d6: On a 1–3, the animals have already secured a carcass and ignore the group unless disturbed; on a 4–5, they flee from the heroes; and on a 6, they attack.

**Avalanche:** The heroes are caught in a sudden landslide. See **Hazards** on page 21 for details.

**Behemoth (page 82):** Roll 1d6: On a 1–5, the rangers spot a single behemoth, while on a 6, they have met a mated pair.

**Bloodwing (page 82):** These lone creatures always attack when encountered, but prefer to do so stealthily to allow them to more easily feed.

**Boomer (page 84):** Boomers are solitary creatures. Even during mating season, these creatures are nearly always alone.

**Death Crawler (page 84):** Travelers come upon a massive, traveling swarm of deadly colemata.

**Drake (page 85):** Roll 1d6: On 1–5, the lacerauns are flying overhead when first spotted, while on 6, the creatures are already on the ground, possibly feeding on a recent kill. Flying drakes attack if they spot the explorers with a Notice roll; if feeding, they pay no attention to the off-worlders unless approached.



**Expedition:** These expeditions are nearly always equipped with suitable gear and one or more vehicles appropriate to the terrain. Unless otherwise indicated, roll 1d6 and consult below.

1-3) **Hunting party:** A group of 2d4 Hunters (page 92). Armed with various slug throwers or gyrojet weapons.

4-5) **Tourists:** 2d6 sightseers and one guide. Use the stats for Citizen from the *Science Fiction Companion* for the tourists. Use the stats for Hunter (page 92) for the guide.

6) **Researchers:** A team of 2d4 researchers involved in field work. Use the stats for Scientist from the *Science Fiction Companion*. The researchers may or may not be adequately armed with weapons to repel an aggressive laceraun.

**Grazers (page 85):** Roll 1d6: On a 1-5, the creatures ignore the heroes unless disturbed, while on a 6, the group's appearance startles the animals, causing a stampede.

**Krok (page 86):** Roll 1d8: On a 1-6, the rangers encounter a single krok; on a 7, they've discovered a mother and 1d4 young (use the stats for maulers, page 86, for the young; on an 8, they've run into a giant krok.

**Lightning Darters (page 86):** Roll 2d6 to determine how many inches across the swarm is.

**Maulers (page 86):** Roll 1d6: On a 1-3, the carnivore or pack has already downed some prey and leaves the explorers alone unless disturbed; on a 4-6, the maulers decide the party is the prey.

**Melting Pit:** The group stumbles into one, or unwittingly sets camp nearby. See **Hazards** on page 21 for details.

**Natural Order Terrorists (page 94):** A group of 2d6 NO terrorists attack any off-world group on sight. They are led by an NO Cell Leader (page 94) who is in addition to the number indicated on the respective encounter table.

**Ravager (page 87):** A pack of 2d6 of these lacerauns. Ravagers always attack, even if they've already secured a kill.

**Scute Boar (page 88):** These lone, lumbering brutes ignore off-worlders unless attacked or otherwise disturbed.

**Scrats (page 89):** A pack of 3d10 of these tiny scavengers. Roll 1d6: On 1-4, these creatures largely pay no attention to the group unless approached, in which case they scatter; on a 5-6,

the pesky runts shadow the party, trying to get at any rations or food the adventurers may have.

**Scylla (page 90):** In the Sea of Fire, 1d6 of these creatures are encountered. In the Capacian, roll 1d8. On a roll of 1-7, there are 2d6 normal versions; on an 8, the group has run into a giant scylla instead.

**Siren Creeper (page 91):** During the day, the group stumbles across one of these deadly plants. Treat this as No Encounter at night, unless the party is traveling after dark.

**Spitter (page 92):** Roll 1d6: On a 1-5, the heroes have wandered across a spitter's lair and it attacks; on a 6, they've come across a mother guarding her young (1d4 total). The young have weaker venom and have not yet developed the ability to spray it. Treat them as anklebiters (page 81), with the Poison Special Ability (Venomous +2).

**Survival Cache:** The group has discovered one of the secure caches of survival supplies Vestal and many of the guide companies have placed throughout the wilderness for emergency use. There is 1d4 weeks' worth of survival rations for one person, a similar amount of water, and an emergency beacon.

**Tornado Swarm:** The explorers spot a tornado swarm either rapidly approaching or spawning nearby. They have 2d6 minutes to find shelter before it hits. See **Hazards** on page 21 for details.

**Tropical Storm:** Hurricane-like conditions threaten the area. See **Hazards** on page 21.

## VESTA

### BURROUGHS

By design, Burroughs isn't nearly as fancy as Ralston, as it is intended primarily as a destination for sportsmen. From here, visitors can charter fishing expeditions into the planet's only ocean, as well as hunt some of the larger lacerauns that prowl the plains to the west. About once a week, a hopper takes expeditions to the northern side of the Fall on drake-hunting trips.

Burroughs serves as the support center for much of eastern Vesta, as well as any oceanic operations. It has a small medical clinic and a JumpSec security station to provide both law enforcement and search-and-rescue operations in the region.

★ **A Most Dangerous Game (page 71):** Hunters hire the party members as guides.



## THE FALL

The Fall was created by a rogue planetoid passing closely by Leviathan in the distant past. The tectonic upheaval resulted in a massive geological displacement in the region that persists to this day. Lower Vesta is a part of the same plate that contains Borea. At one point, the two landmasses were one larger one, until the Sluice separated them from each other. This, combined with the natural barrier posed by the Fall, is the cause for the species differential between Lower Vesta and the rest of the continent.

The Schlacter Foundation discovered an alien artifact along the lower edge of the Fall and is working to secure it without alerting Vestal or JumpSec. The Natural Order is very active near the Fall, as their sponsor, the Schlacter Foundation, has no desire in having a group of tourists stumble across their secret dig. The terrorists' main encampment is only a mile from the Foundation's dig, allowing them to provide the researchers protection against both interlopers and lacerauns.

Neither the guerrillas nor their corporate sponsor want to draw too much attention to the area. The Natural Order has several listening and guard posts scattered throughout the area, and doesn't hesitate to kill anyone that it finds there. However, it is usually very careful to not leave any evidence linking it to the attacks, often trying to make the event look like a laceraun attack or other similar event.

## FALL TABLE

1d20	Result
1	Anklebiter
2	Avalanche
3-6	Drake
7	Expedition (Hunters only)
8-10	Grazers
11	Maulers
12	Natural Order Guerrillas
13-17	No Encounter
18	Scute Boar
19	Scrats
20	Survival Cache

## GREAT EASTERN PLAIN

This expanse of grass and scrubland contains more area than the entire Asian continent. It's the primary habitat of many species of laceraun, topping out with the quarry of choice for most big-game hunters visiting the planet, the a-pex. Burroughs is the staging ground for most major hunting expeditions, and as a result, most of the hunting guides on Leviathan.

The edges of the plains bordering the major bodies of water are relatively well watered by weather patterns moving in from offshore. The inland portion of the region is fairly dry, approaching near-desert conditions near the center. The popularity of the area has insured a number of refueling stations and supply caches have been seeded, both by various guide companies and Vestal itself.

With no major geographical features between the Fall in the south and a low range of mountains on the northern edge of the continent, the Great Eastern Plains are also home to savage windstorms. These, in turn, sometimes spawn short-lived, but awesomely powerful tornado swarms that planetary meteorologists—at least to date—have been unable to predict with any accuracy.

★ **Spectator Sport (page 63):** The heroes come across a camp staging laceraun fights.

## GREAT EASTERN PLAIN TABLE

1d20	Result
1	Anklebiters
2	A-pex
3-7	Grazer Herd
8	Expedition
9-10	Mauler Pack
11-16	No Encounter
17	Scrats
18	Scute Boar
19	Survival Cache
20	Tornado Swarm

## LOWER VESTA

Having once been directly connected by a land bridge to the Borean continent, Lower Vesta shares many species with the southerly landmass. It has a higher average elevation though, and this results in a slightly different biosphere. Kroks and other lacerauns that favor riverine or swampy terrain are fairly rare in Lower Vesta.



There are even fewer visitors to Lower Vesta than Borea, mainly because the jungle blanketing most of the region is as thick as that of the Stygian Deep. Only a few isolated hunting and refueling stations exist here, and they may go weeks or even months between use by hunting expeditions. Purely sightseeing tourist groups are virtually unheard of in Lower Vesta.

That makes this area the most remote and underdeveloped of any on Leviathan. Given the sparse population of the planet, that's something of an accomplishment. It also is a lucky circumstance for the Schlacter Foundation and its Natural Order allies. With the Fall to one side and the vast, desolate expanse of Lower Vesta on the other, they're shielded from accidental discovery almost as effectively as the most advanced stealth technology available.

### LOWER VESTA TABLE

1d20	Result
1	Angler
2-3	Bloodwing
4	Death Crawler
5-7	Grazers
8	Maulers
9	Natural Order Guerrillas
10-15	No Encounter
16	Ravagers
17	Siren Creeper
18-19	Spitter
20	Tropical Storm

### RALSTON

Unlike most other tourist destinations, there are almost no "affordable" options available. That fact isn't particularly shocking since the price of a ticket to Leviathan by itself is more than an average citizen makes in a year. The corporation knows very well that its target demographic is best described as comfortably wealthy and prices accordingly.

Ralston is home to the only spaceport on the planet and the center of both Vestal Interplanetary and JumpCorp operations on the planet. The city has a single hospital, but several smaller urgent care facilities. The majority of JumpSec enforcement officers are stationed here as well, helping to make sure the paying customers in town remain peaceful, if not always orderly.

Like most established population centers on Leviathan, Ralston is surrounded by static repeller fences to keep any wandering lacerauns at bay. The fencing doesn't keep flying pests at bay, so most new arrivals invest in personal repellors almost immediately upon disembarking at the spaceport.

★ **A Most Dangerous Game (page 71):** Hunters hire the party members as guides.

★ **Mission of Mercy (page 69):** The team is sent out after a downed supply hopper.

### STYGIAN DEEP

The jungle is triple-canopy—that is there are three layers of tree cover between the sky and the ground—over most of its area, making the floor heavily shaded even during daytime and virtually pitch-black at night. Ground travel in the Deep is grueling and tedious. Even crawlers can only bull through a few miles a day when not on one of the jungle's rare roads.

The Stygian Delta, at the mouth of the Styx, is a swampy area infested by incalculable numbers of pests and parasites, not to mention massive lacerauns who rely on the waters to help support their immense weight.

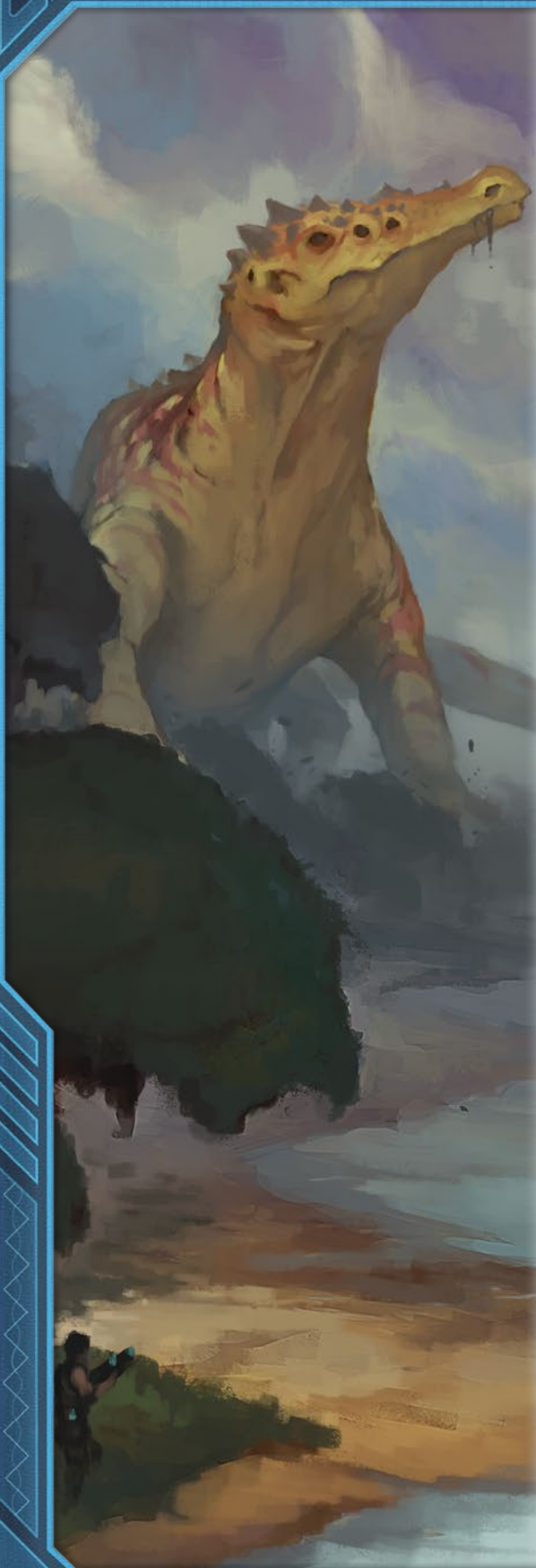
### STYGIAN DEEP TABLE

1d20	Result
1	Angler
2-3	Bloodwing
4	Boomer
5	Death Crawler
6-9	Grazer Herd
10-11	Expedition
12	Krok
13	Mauler Pack
14-17	No Encounter
18-19	Melting Pit
20	Survival Cache

### BOREA

The flooded terrain is home to many of the larger varieties of lacerauns, and behemoths are a common sight in the Delta. Likewise, predators large enough to prey upon them—usually kroks—prowl the swampy regions. But the continent also holds several species that are found only on Borea, or across the Sluice in Lower Vesta, like ravagers and spitters.





## BOREA TABLE

1d20	Result
1	Angler
2	Behemoth
3-4	Bloodwing
5	Boomer
6	Expedition (Hunters or Researchers)
7-9	Grazers
10	Krok
11	Maulers
12-16	No Encounter
17	Ravagers
18	Siren Creeper
19	Spitter
20	Tropical Storm

## MOORLAND

A big part of the reason for the difference in Moorland's construction is its location. The town floats about four stories above the mire of the Amymonian Delta itself, suspended by six antigravity generators of unprecedented size. The settlement's polymer construction helps protect it from the excessive moisture in the region, and the resulting rot, molds and funguses that result with more traditional materials.

The antigrav generators not only keep the buildings out of the bog water below, but also provide an additional line of defense against the denizens of the Delta. Static repellers do affect behemoths and giant kroks the same as all lacerauns, but when one of those is under a full head of steam, it might just bull through the fence by virtue of sheer inertia!

Moorland's structures are connected via a solid platform that provides the equivalent of "streets," although no vehicles are used within the settlement itself. Catwalks are used to connect outlying structures or in areas of low traffic. Hopper landing pads are present on the edge of the elevated town, with several at ground level and two on the upper level. Skimmers, flatboats, and the occasional crawler are garaged underneath the town's "floor."

Moorland contains a dozen or so JumpSec contractors as law enforcement, as well as a small urgent care facility, with the ability to stabilize most serious injuries or conditions long enough for transport back to Ralston.



★ **Out of Season (page 73):** The group investigates a large number of dead animals.

★ **Stranded (page 68):** Spacers spot a wrecked airboat.

SCHLACTER FOUNDATION  
RESEARCH FACILITY

The Schlacter facility is largely self-contained, relying only on Ralston for access to its spaceport and to make occasional sundry purchases. The facility, located on one of the few pieces of dry land in the Borean Delta, is home to nearly 50 scientists, field researchers, and security personnel.

Claiming intellectual property security concerns, the facility is off-limits to all non-Foundation personnel. The corporation has leased an area of land over 10 miles in diameter to ensure its privacy. The real reason is that Schlacter wants to keep tourists—or anyone else—from stumbling across what his foundation is actually doing. Schlacter is less interested in what they can learn about the development of life forms on Leviathan and more interested in how they can use it for profit. They're deeply involved with gene splicing, cybernetic augmentation, and similar methods to weaponize the xenofoms, all with the intent to sell the results to any number of off-world militaries and less-ethical governments.

The Foundation figures prominently in the *Extinction Event* Plot Point Campaign (page 32).

★ **Rescue Ops (page 76):** The spacers check in on a field research team.

★ **Supply Run (page 73):** Schlacter enlists the heroes to wrangle new research subjects.

ALTIA

BIO-FRONTIERS LABORATORY

Besides Precipice, the Bio-Frontiers facility is the only other settlement on Altia of more than a handful. It serves as home to more than two dozen researchers and technicians, their families, and a small security force. Bio-Frontiers is dedicated to pharmaceutical development and gene modification, primarily for the purpose of therapeutic applications and advanced medical technologies. The corporation states its primary interest on Leviathan is currently focused on harvesting chemical compounds from the flora for use in experimental drugs.

Unlike the Schlacter Foundation, the scientists at Bio-Frontiers are less concerned with the

development of life on Leviathan than in ways the current xenofoms can contribute to the quality of life elsewhere in the galaxy. These guys are completely on the level. However, they tend to get in over their collective heads with the indigenous creatures.

★ **Supply Run (page 73):** Bio-Frontiers enlists the heroes to wrangle new research subjects.

HIGH PLAINS AND THULE  
MOUNTAINS

Wildlife on the Altian plains in many ways resembles that of the Great Northern Plain. The sloping grassland is home to grazer herds and a rare scute boar that wanders out of the edges of the mountains to the south. The open ground is well suited to the occasional a-pex, allowing it to maneuver its bulk more easily than the forests to the north.

Mountaineering parties regularly depart from Precipice to scale the peaks of the Thules. While drakes pose a threat to climbers at lower altitudes, most commercial guides use hoppers to reach base camps above the flying predators' comfort zone. Unpredictable, powerful winds in the higher altitudes, often combined with blowing snow, make flying even hoppers tricky. Landing under those conditions applies a -2 to -4 penalty to any Piloting rolls, and rolling a one on the skill die, regardless of the Wild Die's outcome, results in a crash. For that reason, most rescue parties end up traveling by foot above the 15,000 feet mark.

★ **Mistaken Identity (page 65):** The group investigates unusual laceraun behavior.

★ **Spectator Sport (page 63):** The heroes come across a camp staging laceraun fights.

ALTIAN HIGH PLAINS/THULE  
MOUNTAINS ENCOUNTER TABLE

1d20	Result
1	Anklebiters
2	A-pex (Avalanche if in mountains)
3-7	Drake
8	Expedition
9-12	Grazer Herd
13	Maulers
14-18	No Encounter
19	Scute Boar
20	Survival Cache



## PRECIPICE

Of all the major settlements, Precipice is the one that seems to draw the least number of hunters. This isolated mountain town caters more to sightseers, mountaineers, and outdoor adventurers. Glide suit flights over the Evanesence Falls are one of the more popular attractions among the younger daredevils drawn to the town.

Precipice is well shielded from the majority of the continent's larger animals. It's rare to encounter any lacerauns outside an occasional drake or two, and the JumpSec contingent includes a few snipers to eliminate any of the winged carnivores that get too close to town or the Falls.

## BODIES OF WATER

Even though they make up over 60% of the planet's surface, Leviathan's oceans receive little attention from Vestal or any of its corporate lessees. A few isolated resorts have sprung up in the Sea of Fire, and the beach at Ralston is popular with the less-outdoorsy tourists, but by and large, waterborne activities are rare.

## CAPACIAN OCEAN

The largest body of water on Leviathan is largely unexplored beyond satellite imagery. A few volcanic islands or archipelagos are scattered around the Capacian, but with the central concentration of the major landmasses around the Sea of Fire, there has been little incentive for Vestal or other corporations to invest in developing any of them. Outside of fishing expeditions from Burroughs and Precipice, only one or two minor research installations have been thus far established to catalog marine life.

## SEA OF FIRE

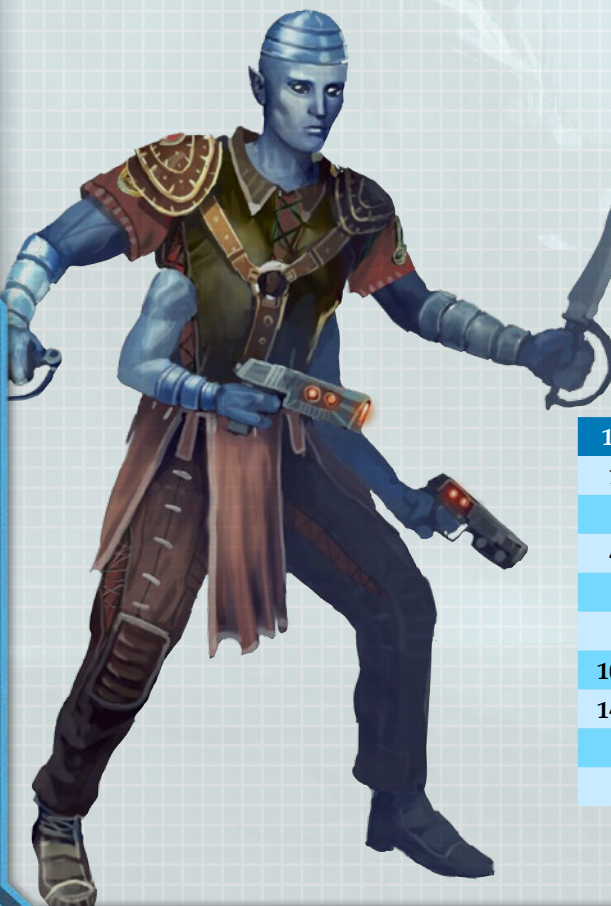
Thanks to its equatorial location, the Sea of Fire is largely tropical in climate. Its waters are uniformly warm, thanks to the relatively shallow depths. The deepest parts of the Sea seldom exceed 100 feet. While major storms do often spring up, the lack of deep water also helps prevent them from reaching hurricane-like proportions.

The shallow water also serves to keep most of the marine life in the sea moderately sized. The true gargantuan creatures on Leviathan make their homes in the Capacian Ocean, where they are seldom encountered by off-worlders.

## OCEANIC ENCOUNTER TABLES

All creatures on this table are marine equivalents of the land-based animal listed. See the **Aquatic Laceraun** sidebar (page 79) for details. For results with two listed entries, the first entry is for the Sea of Fire. Substitute the creature in parentheses for encounters in the Capacian Ocean.

1d20	Result
1-2	Anklebiters
3	Behemoth
4-7	Grazer Herd
8	Krok (A-pex)
9	Lightning Darters
10-13	Maulers
14-18	No Encounter
19	Scrat
20	Scylla (Giant Scylla)









# CHAPTER FIVE: EXTINCTION EVENT

*Extinction Event* is a Plot Point campaign set on Leviathan. This campaign begins with the escalating conflict between the Natural Order (NO) and Vestal Interplanetary and leads your spacers deep into the jungles of the planet where they uncover—and hopefully thwart—an ancient threat not only to life on Leviathan, but the rest of the known universe as well!

The Plot Point campaign serves to provide your group with a shared goal, while also giving you room to highlight your spacers' individual characters. The campaign brings your spacers into the limelight as they first work to counter the damage done by the NO's terrorist actions and then later as they are key in uncovering the puppet master pulling the NO's strings. Finally, it falls to them to save Leviathan and possibly

hundreds of other worlds from a cataclysmic event of alien origin.

Additionally, and perhaps as important, it gives you a ready-made campaign that you can run more or less on the fly.

Here's a quick summary of each of the Plot Points so you can get a feel for how the campaign flows. While they are structured to be played consecutively in the order presented, it's not an absolute necessity in some cases. Also, you'll usually have a good deal of flexibility in the time between Plot Points. This gives you the maximum flexibility to work in your own stories or other *Savage Tales* (see page 63).

## PART ONE: IT'S NOT JUST A JOB

The spacers meet their employers and get the scoop on what their job entails. This Plot Point covers the initial recruitment, travel to the planet, and meeting with their new boss—Vestal Operations.

## PART TWO: STOCHASTIC EFFECTS

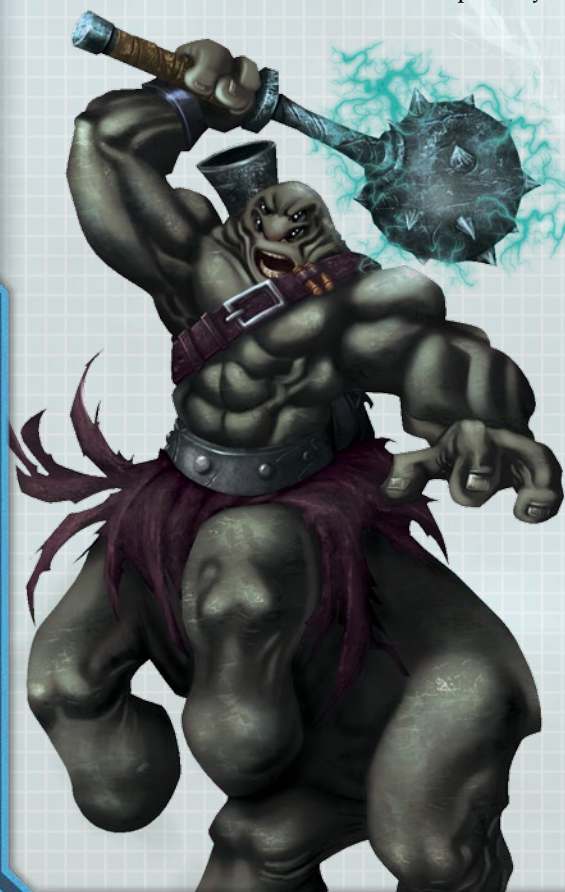
Before the heroes even complete their initial training, Natural Order attacks Vestal Interplanetary. A group of infiltrators drop a section of the static repeller barrier around Ralston, allowing a group of lacerauns to stampede through the city. The terrorists use the confusion to sabotage several key pieces of infrastructure.

## PART THREE: EXPOSURE

The heroes' first field mission is to check on a geological survey team along the Fall that hasn't made its weekly update. Although no one in Ralston knows it, the team found something strange in one of their core samples, but before they're able to make sense of it, the Natural Order attacks.

## PART FOUR: PROPAGATION

The spacers undertake a rescue mission to recover a downed Schlacter Foundation VTOL.





Upon arrival, they find the craft is carrying crates of military-grade weaponry—and a crew that is apparently in the throes of a familiar disease. Before they can fully investigate, a Foundation team arrives and orders them away.

## PART FIVE: OUTBREAK

The rangers are sent to help salvage what's left of an isolated lodge that was destroyed in what was apparently a grazer stampede. When the characters arrive, they discover the local fauna behaving erratically, or more accurately, unusually organized.

## PART SIX: DIAGNOSIS

Using information recovered from the crashed Schlacter VTOL, the heroes locate the drop point for the weapon delivery. This leads them to the site of Schlacter's excavation of the artifact. Only a skeleton crew of Natural Order guerrillas is present, but evidence of the Foundation's activities is obvious—along with nanite-infected lacerauns, researchers, and terrorists.

## PART SEVEN: QUARANTINE

The Foundation fully reactivates the gth-kel probe, mistakenly believing they can alter the program to their own ends. Soon the nanite plague begins to overrun Borea, threatening Moorland. The rangers are on hand to help with the evacuation process, battling infected lacerauns, argumentative residents, and the impending structural collapse of the settlement.

## PART EIGHT: PANDEMIC

As the only uninfected JumpSec personnel on Borea, the rangers must stop the probe before it remakes the planet and possibly the Known Worlds.

## ANCIENT HISTORY

Before we get to the actual Plot Points, you're going to need some history on Leviathan—or at least one event in the distant past. Before life had even begun crawling from Leviathan's oceans, an alien spacecraft landed on the planet.

The craft was a fully automated, self-replicating probe, often referred to as a von Neumann device. Its creators, a race called the gth-kel, intended the probe to transform the planet into a suitable environment for their habitation.

## JUMPCORP

In *The Last Parsec*, the player characters are employees of the galaxy-spanning corporation JumpCorp.

As such, they are collectively called "the team" or "the JumpCorp team" throughout this adventure, or more generically the "explorers," "rangers," or another term in keeping with their spacefaring lifestyles.

**Compensation:** Each JumpCorp team member has agreed to a retainer of C\$1,000 per week, which they get paid even between assignments. When they are on an active mission, each team member receives an additional C\$2,000 per week; JumpCorp expects a concerted, all-hours effort, even in difficult or hazardous conditions, in exchange for that generous salary. The standard mission completion bonus, should one be offered, is C\$10,000 per team member.

**Assets and Aid:** JumpCorp has regional offices in many star systems and sectors throughout Known Space, as well as research stations, trade and travel offices, and independent operatives in many far-flung corners of the galaxy. While these can sometimes offer some material assistance, clarification of instructions and advice, they are seldom in a position to lend direct aid to their team members, who they consider to be independent contractors who are expected to be self-reliant.

## THE GTH-KEL

The gth-kel were aggressively expansionist and exploitative in their exploration of the universe and utterly lacking in empathy for other cultures or life. In fact, in their language, the word for "life" when applied to any species other than themselves most accurately translates as "self-moving object." The gth-kel evaluated the worth of other life forms only by the usefulness the species provided them.

The probe that landed on Leviathan was one of many the gth-kel had targeted at suitable planets



for their colonization. The race launched dozens of these spacecraft as they expanded into the region of space now called the Known Worlds. The gth-kel made little effort to determine whether a world was already inhabited before selecting it for planetscaping.

A probe's primary directive was to reshape the destination planet into a world suitable for gth-kel colonization. To accomplish this, it employed hordes of nanites. Each nanite, depending on its programming, could process raw material into usable resource, build complex structure, or repurpose existing matter and objects to the directive's needs.

As the gth-kel evolved on a relatively high-temperature planet with a dense, methane-based atmosphere, this almost always meant the extinction of all organic life on the planet. And since the probe used its surroundings as resources for the planetscaping process, any non-organic life was often consumed as raw materials. Finally, any native species surviving the actual planetscaping process were deliberately exterminated to prepare the way for gth-kel colony ships.

## UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

As a side note, eventually one of these probes landed on a world colonized by another race as powerful as they were, the sethiss. In the ensuing war, the gth-kel, unrestrained by any conscience or mercy, inflicted terrible losses on the sethiss. Both sides developed weapons of immense, terrible power; both used them without restraint.

In the end, the sethiss finally annihilated the gth-kel, razing not only their colonies, but their home world as well. When the war was finished, nearly every trace of the gth-kel had been obliterated from the universe. Neither humanity nor any of the other races currently populating the known universe has any record of the gth-kel. Occasionally, a scientific team or explorer stumbles across a relic belonging to either them or the sethiss—sometimes with disastrous results—but for now they remain a mystery shrouded in the dark between stars.

## SYSTEM FAILURE

The probe that landed on Leviathan arrived before any complex life had even begun to emerge. The von Neumann device had barely begun its initial program when it was interrupted by an event the gth-kel had not prepared for nor even imagined in their contingency planning.

A rogue planetoid entered the Sigma Hydrae system. Its trajectory crossed Leviathan's orbit, passing dangerously close to the planet itself. The planetoid itself was barely a fraction of the size of Leviathan, but it came so close that its own gravity well wreaked havoc on the planet's crust. The tidal forces generated by the near-miss caused violent upheavals throughout the crust.

The gth-kel probe had landed virtually right on top of the site of one of these colossal faults—known to most spacers today as "the Fall." Massive electrical storms triggered by the tectonic shifts disrupted both the probe itself, and through it, its nanite workhorses. To add final insult to injury, the probe was buried under tons of earth and debris as the fault buckled under unimaginable pressure.

The rogue planetoid fared even worse for its encounter. Leviathan's gravity literally pulled it apart as it passed. Most of the larger pieces retained enough energy to escape Leviathan's pull, but the remainder slowly settled into orbit, eventually dispersing somewhat evenly to form the planet's thin asteroid belt.

## CORPORATE INTRIGUE

For the rest of the relevant history, we need to fast-forward an epoch or two to present-day Leviathan. The Schlacter Foundation signed a lease with Vestal to establish a research facility in the Ur Lowlands. The original intent was for the Foundation to tinker with some of the more formidable predators on Leviathan in the hopes of developing weaponized versions it could then market elsewhere.

During one of its sweeps to capture new fodder for its experiments, the capture team recorded some anomalous data near the Fall. Following up on the strange sensor readings, the Foundation discovered the presence of the gth-kel probe buried in the fault. The alien artifact was far outside the boundaries of the property the Foundation had leased. After a thorough review of the agreement with Vestal, the corporation's legal advisors came to the conclusion that the Foundation had no legitimate claim to the find—and thus no chance to profit from anything that might be learned from the artifact. This was not an acceptable answer to the governing board.



## SLEIGHT OF HAND

The Natural Order is a militant, interplanetary environmental activist group that opposes the exploitation of all newly discovered worlds by governments and corporations. They're a relatively minor player in most systems, if for no other reason than it's hard for them to find much support for their activities. Even those who might agree with the basic premise of their philosophy usually take issue with the methods they use to pursue it—sabotage, terrorism, and even outright armed conflict.

One of the best kept corporate secrets of the Schlacter Foundation is that it actually bankrolls the terrorist organization. The Foundation uses the group to strike directly against competing corporations without dirtying his hands or reputation. Furthermore, in a brilliant PR move, the Foundation subtly alludes to the fact that it is seldom targeted by such violent environmental activism, and that is *clearly* because its corporate ethics are above reproach in that area.

Vestal Interplanetary's Leviathan venture was already dangerously close to replacing what little black ink remained in its ledgers with red. Few things put a damper on tourist travel quicker than an armed insurgency. Using the Foundation's logistical network, the Natural Order infiltrated a sizable contingent onto Leviathan. The company also now keeps them well supplied with high-end weaponry and tech.

The Foundation sent a small team to begin a clandestine dig at the artifact's location, masking it from orbital scans with cloaking fields and guarded by Natural Order terrorists. If Vestal Interplanetary is forced to abandon its claim, the Foundation plans to step up operations and remove the artifact before a new buyer assumes ownership. If not, its workers will continue to plug away while Vestal and its JumpCorp security forces are distracted by the Natural Order's attacks.

The Natural Order guerrillas reached operational capacity on Leviathan shortly before the heroes make landfall on the planet.

## PART ONE: IT'S NOT JUST A JOB

The campaign begins with the characters following up on advertisements by JumpCorp for individuals to accept positions on Leviathan. Specifically, the corporation is looking for people

with varied skill sets and a willingness to work in "unique and challenging locations" in exchange for "premium pay and benefits." Initial inquiries from adventurers hoping to get more specifics are answered with little more than fancy ad copy.

It's not necessary that the heroes know each other before the Plot Point Campaign. Vestal Interplanetary needs field operatives who can do everything from emergency medical treatment to repair work to managing multi-ton eating machines on a rampage. Outdoor skills are useful to characters in this campaign, and Survival is beneficial for any adventurer on Leviathan.

## IT'S AN ADVENTURE

The details are available only after the heroes agree to sign fairly extensive non-compete and non-disclosure agreements. JumpCorp is fielding a contract to place troubleshooters with Vestal Interplanetary on Leviathan. It wants to make absolutely sure no freelancers get wind of the opportunity and undercut them on the deal. However, once the potential hires agree to the legal rigmarole, company reps provide all the information they could want.

*"You'll be taking a job as a "ranger" on Sigma Hydrae II. To put that into Galactic Common, that means you'll be working as a troubleshooter on Leviathan. If that still doesn't put it into context, here's the long form.*

*"Vestal runs a high-end resort on Leviathan, a remote planet—and by remote, I mean you jump to the middle of nowhere, then jump twice more. And by 'runs a high-end resort on Leviathan' I mean the entire planet is basically the resort. And by 'resort' I mean a largely unsettled wilderness that's home to the closest thing to dinosaurs you're likely to see outside of a trid.*

*"Mostly, you'll be handling jobs out in the wilds, search-and-rescue, wildlife management, maybe some minor regulations enforcement, but don't worry, we've got a contingent of JumpSec officers already on planet to handle the everyday drudgeries of law enforcement. Best of all, you're going to get plenty of downtime, and you'll be spending it in one of the most exclusive destinations in the galaxy. And on top of that, you get to see giant lizards in their natural habitat."*

JumpCorp offers a flat C\$1,000 a week, along with free transportation to Leviathan and back upon the one-year contract's completion. The company doesn't negotiate the price. Room and board is provided by Vestal, as well as basic gear.





## EN ROUTE

After accepting the offer, the heroes are booked on a JumpCorp flight headed to Leviathan within a few days. The adventurers are the only individuals on the flight under the sub-contract to Vestal. The trip takes approximately two weeks. While it is uneventful, possibly even boring, the journey does provide the group plenty of time to get acquainted, perhaps through Interludes (see *Savage Worlds*).

Most “daytime” hours are spent in computer-directed courses on Leviathan. Included are introductory lessons on planetary geography, climate, life forms, and hazards. There are also modules on the structure of Vestal Interplanetary operations on the planet and how JumpSec integrates with them. Finally, there are extensive periods of instruction on customer interaction and legal considerations. (The end result of these tedious, but instructive hours in front of a computer screen is that the characters can make Common Knowledge rolls about Leviathan at a –2 penalty by the time they arrive on planet.)

The rest of the passengers are standard JumpSec security officers. Only a couple have been to Leviathan before—it’s a relatively new contract for JumpSec—but all of them have heard plenty of rumors. This is a perfect opportunity to provide the characters with some basic information about the planet, as well as seed misinformation and rumors.

## FIRST LOOK

Their flight arrives at Leviathan at what corresponds to mid-morning, local time. As the ship approaches the Ralston Spaceport, the captain informs the passengers that this is the

only spaceport on the planet. Out the windows and on several view screens, the adventurers get their first look at Leviathan.

The spacecraft approaches from the south, coming in over a calm, blue sea. Ralston sits on the shore, and waves roll gently against a white sandy beach crisscrossed by wooden boardwalks. A few piers extend a hundred or so yards out, with some dedicated to fishing and water watching, while others sport various amusement rides, restaurants, and other attractions.

Beyond the beach, modern luxury hotels reach 30 or more stories into the sky. Each is unique in its architecture, but all are adorned with bright lights, competing for the eye’s attention. As the ship passes overhead, the number of restaurants, trid cinemas, casinos, and live theaters are virtually uncountable.

What makes the collection of tourist amenities even more astonishing is the relatively small size of the city. At most, 50,000 people might live within its boundaries, but it has the entertainment capacity of a city five times its size. And all of that entertainment is at the absolute highest point on the scale. There are no dive bars, no budget trid venues, and no cheap hotels. Everything is 4-star or above.

The ship reaches the far side of the city and touches down on the planet’s solitary spaceport. It too is considerably larger than one would expect for such a small settlement, but what catches the new arrivals’ attention is what lies beyond it. At the edge of the spaceport, a line of 20 feet-tall poles rings the perimeter, apparently extending around the entire city. The poles are approximately 10 yards apart, but crackling energy arcs between them in an almost solid wall.



A veteran of Leviathan explains, *"That's the static repeller fence. It keeps the lacerauns out of the city,"* before walking off to unload her gear. Behind the fence, a hundred yards of open ground separates civilization from the edge of Leviathan's wilderness. The cleared ground ends at a wall of vegetation that rises abruptly to nearly 150 feet and stretches out of sight from east to west.

## TROUBLE IN PARADISE

A JumpSec bus picks the group up after they disembark. As they're departing the spaceport, any character who makes a successful Notice roll spots about four or five individuals with protest signs near the main entrance to the facility. They're too far away to make out the details, but the driver identifies them if asked.

*"That's a bunch that calls themselves the 'Natural Order.' They're apparently some eco-freaks who shelled out the creds to purchase a ticket here just to complain. Bunch of nuts if you ask me."*

*"Near as I can figure out, they want Vestal to pack up and leave, so the dinos can live in peace. I've been on a few expeditions. I can tell you even if we left 'em alone, they'd start in killing each other quicker than you could say Betelgeuse."*

If the heroes follow up on the protestors, they find the driver's information is largely correct. The small group is opposed to the commercialization, colonization, or any interaction at all with the indigenous life on Leviathan. For now, they seem like dedicated believers, but peaceful. If questioned they provide a variety of stories about their backgrounds. Some claim to be trust fund kids who are living off family wealth, others are students on break, and so on.

They're actually the public face of the Natural Order terrorists. The group also serves as sleeper agents, waiting for when the guerrillas make their first big move against the city.

## PREP TIME

Over the next three weeks, JumpSec keeps the new recruits in Ralston, continuing their orientation. The soon-to-be rangers get considerable hands-on training with most of the common vehicles and equipment they are to be issued. They are familiarized with the common hazards of the planet, from pests to a-pexes, and drilled on geography even further. JumpSec does not provide any skill or combat training during this period. By the end of this period, characters

can roll Common Knowledge with regard to most general topics on Leviathan without any penalty.

They're also provided with a fairly comprehensive overview of the planetary legal code. Although they're not technically law-enforcement personnel, they may encounter crimes in the course of their duties. While law enforcement officers (also JumpSec personnel) will be available in most cases to handle enforcement, arrest, or investigations, the company is well aware the nature of their work may put the rangers in the position where they are the only representatives within a thousand miles, so it does its best to make sure the rangers are prepared.

## STANDARD LOAD-OUT

Once they've completed training and are assigned field duty, JumpSec provides each ranger with the following gear. Although it is free-of-charge, the corporation expects it back at the end of each assignment—or, barring a line-of-duty-loss report, reimbursement in the form of a paycheck deduction.

Should you need stats on another ranger team—say the heroes themselves need rescuing—the other units are composed of a pilot, a JumpSec paramedic, and two JumpSec security officers. You can find the stats on all of these in the Bestiary.

**Individual gear:** Body armor (+4), commlink, laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2), spare particle pack (×2), personal repeller, two tubes of medi-gel, and a survival kit.

Each team also receives a standard pack of gear that is usually carried on the team's vehicle until needed. Each team has a dedicated hopper equipped with both winch and jungle penetrator, but may be assigned a crawler or skimmer depending on the mission parameters.

**Team gear:** Binoculars, energy tent (1 per two team members), laceraun rifle (Range 50/100/200, Damage 3d10, RoF 1, AP 6, HW), 50 rounds of ammunition, laceraun prods (×2), a portable static field generator (large), and wall walker systems (×2).



## PART TWO: STOCHASTIC EFFECTS

At some point during the character's initial training period, the Natural Order begins its campaign against Vestal and the off-worlders. They start the war with a bang—literally.

### BIG BANG

The terrorists want to make as great an impact as possible on Vestal and its endeavors, so they first attack Ralston. This lets them affect the largest number of people, symbolically strike a blow against the seat of the corporation's power, and make every tourist and other visitor to Leviathan question their safety. Much of their initial preparation have gone into this attack.

For a couple of weeks, the group has been capturing lacerauns and herding others into the region surrounding Ralston. The NO activated its sleeper agents inside the city, ordering them to set explosives at key points on the static repeller fence and at the central power station. The terrorists plan to bring down the fence in several areas, and then drive wild lacerauns into the city streets.

## NATURE UNLEASHED

The NO puts its plan into play not long after nightfall. The first clue the heroes have that anything is amiss is when a series of loud booms goes off almost simultaneously around the city. The lights in the barracks flicker, dim, then go out briefly before emergency lights kick in.

Moments later, one of the JumpSec training officers shouts over the comm. He tells the heroes and any other security officers or rangers present to get to the complex's center plaza for orders. The entire facility is in an uproar.

Once there, they find all off-duty security personnel and members of the ranger team on downtime present. In less than a minute, a JumpSec officer appears and gives a quick briefing on the situation.

*"We are still getting a handle on the situation. However, preliminary damage assessment indicates the static repeller fence has been breached in several areas. Simultaneously, the primary power station suffered a catastrophic failure. Furthermore, we are receiving scattered reports of laceraun incursions in the outskirts of the city.*

*"At present, it appears these events are connected and the result of what may be terrorist activity. All security and ranger personnel are to report to the armory for equipment issue. Each team will receive their orders via commlink directly from JumpSec Operations. Move out!"*

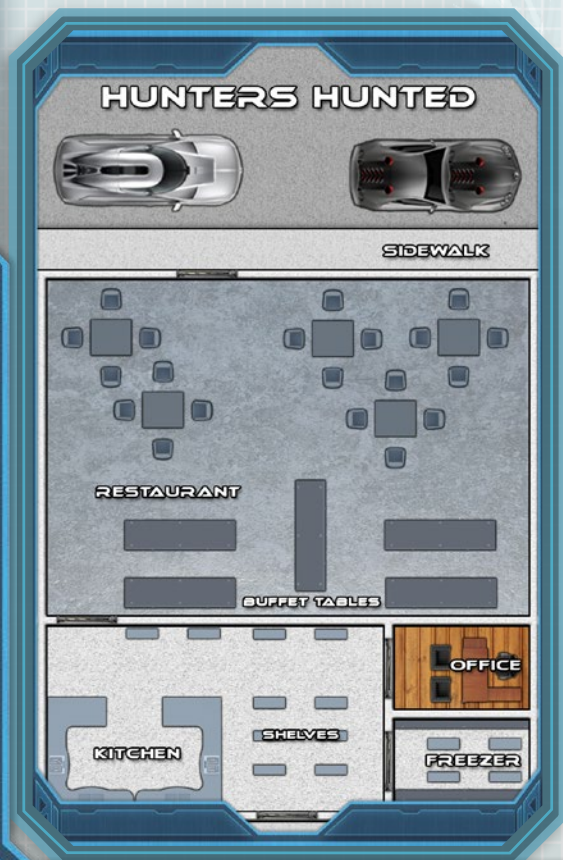
### FRENZY IN THE STREETS

At the armory, the rangers-in-training are issued laser rifles, body armor, and two tubes of medi-gel. The team is also provided with two laceraun prods. When they don their commlinks, their first set of orders comes over the air.

There are several encounters presented below for you to throw against your heroes. Feel free to choose as many as you want to challenge the adventurers without sending them to the morgue. Once they've overcome the selected encounters, this Plot Point wraps up in **The Enemy You Know**.

### HUNTERS HUNTED

A group of trapped tourists has reported a pack of maulers has trapped them in a restaurant along the main drag. The adventurers are routed to that location to deal with the threat. The primary goal is to prevent the predators from harming any of the civilians.





The heroes reach the scene before the maulers break through the plate glass window in the front of the restaurant—but just. The lacerauns are milling around the outside, eyeing their intended victims. Combat begins when the rangers arrive.

Each round, if the maulers are dealt a Club for their Action Card, any who have not yet been attacked by one of the characters (whether they suffered damage or not), charges the glass windows. If the glass has not already been broken, the creature busts through it ending 1" inside the restaurant. Otherwise, it chooses a random civilian and closes to attack.

A spacer can attempt to draw one of the maulers' attention away from the people trapped inside as a free action by making an Intimidation roll, or with a Smarts roll at a -2 penalty. With a success, the animal focuses on her that round instead of the civilians. However, if the creature isn't attacked before the next time the lacerauns draw a Club, it returns to the trapped victims.

The lacerauns continue to fight until two-thirds or more are Incapacitated, at which time they flee.

- **Trapped Tourists (10):** Use the stats for Citizen (see *Science Fiction Companion*). One out of every four is armed with a knife (Str+d4).
- **Maulers (2, plus one per hero):** See page 86.

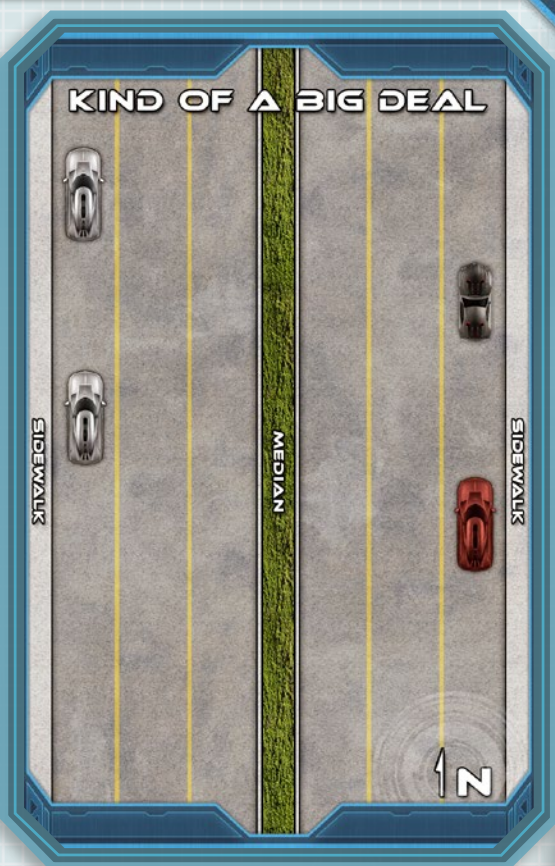
## KIND OF A BIG DEAL

The NO managed to chase a behemoth from the Stygian Delta into Ralston, and the terrified creature is rampaging through downtown. Unfortunately, all JumpSec officers with weapons big enough to penetrate the monster's hide are already engaged along the perimeter. The rangers are sent to clear the streets ahead of the beast.

JumpSec would rather they didn't kill the laceraun, as that's a lot of dead meat to move out of town. It's far easier to herd the animal than haul its carcass away. However, citizens' lives come first, so if the team has to bring the beast down, JumpSec understands.

Evacuating the civilians ahead of the enormous herbivore is a Dramatic Task using Intimidation or Persuasion at a -2 penalty, or Smarts at a -4. One ranger takes the lead and other heroes can assist with cooperative rolls. The assisting characters can choose any of the three listed traits to roll and are not required to use the same one as the lead character.

The behemoth is too large to fit down any side streets, so it sticks to the main thoroughfare,



Ralston's Strip. The team has five rounds before the behemoth reaches a less heavily populated area. They must accumulate five successes to clear the civilians before the animal reaches it.

Rangers not assisting the lead character can delay the behemoth's progress by engaging it in combat, effectively gaining extra rounds for the evacuation team. Any Shaken result the heroes manage to score adds another round to the Dramatic Task. The narrow confines—from a behemoth's perspective—prevent the creature from fleeing if Panicked, delaying it a round, as if it had been Shaken. However, the adventurers can only gain one bonus round during each round of combat, even if they score multiple Shaken or Panicked results in a single round. Also, the behemoth fights back if attacked.

If heroes manage to evacuate the civilians before the creature arrives, a properly equipped JumpSec team arrives to deal with the behemoth. If they don't, the team still handles the behemoth, but there are casualties among the bystanders.

- **Behemoth (1):** See page 82.



## SHOOT 'EM UP

The number of downed fence repellers and damaged power station has exhausted Vestal's supply of maintenance teams. Since field repairs falls within the purview of ranger teams, JumpSec sends the spacers to a section of fencing that's off-line, unaware that Natural Order terrorists took this portion of fence down to bait an ambush. The heroes are to repair it, or failing that, prevent any more lacerauns from entering the city.

The terrorists lie in wait nearby, hoping to take out one or more of the corporation's vital maintenance crew. The terrorists are hiding 20' from the damaged fence. It's dark and they're well camouflaged, requiring Notice rolls (-4) to spot them before they attack. The lighting penalty (-2) affects both parties once the shooting starts. The bushwhackers weren't expecting armed resistance; once half their number is incapacitated, they flee into the jungle. The cell leader does not surrender under any circumstances.

★ **Natural Order Terrorist Leader (1):** Use the stats for Terrorist Cell Leader on page 94.

• **Natural Order Terrorists (1 per hero):** Use the stats for Terrorist on page 94.

## THE ENEMY YOU KNOW

Thanks in part to the heroes, order is restored to Ralston before morning. Maintenance teams restore the repeller fencing, and backup generators provide power while the main station is repaired. A few lacerauns may still be at large in the city, and JumpSec can detail the rangers to deal with those stragglers if you want to keep your adventurers busy for a little while longer.

Up until the attack, JumpSec considered the NO protestors little more than an embarrassing nuisance. While the NO has been associated with violent actions on other planets, the local branch had seemed harmless. Enforcement officers are dispatched to round up known members of the organization, only to discover the "protestors" have disappeared—most likely into the surrounding jungle where they've joined the ranks of the guerrillas.

JumpSec issues standing orders for the capture and arrest of any NO members encountered. The heroes still must complete any remaining orientation and training, but their superiors are already beginning to rethink the rangers' role in light of recent developments.

## FIELD ASSIGNMENTS

Upon completion, the rangers are all assigned to the same team, along with a pilot if none of them can fly a hopper. They're given Moorland as their initial base of operations, with responsibilities covering not only Borea, but also Lower Vesta. This is a standard posting for new rangers, mainly because the teams with seniority jockey to get out of the miserable swamp as quickly as possible.

Throughout the course of their tour, JumpSec may temporarily assign them to other settlements and regions as needed, but they are always rotated back to Moorland before too long. The majority of **Extinction Event** occurs in Borea and Lower Vesta, but this allows you to let the group explore more of the world between Plot Points.

In general, they work four days on and then receive three days downtime. Each month they also receive a five-day long weekend so they can visit Ralston and spend some of their hard-earned money.

PART THREE:  
EXPOSURE

*This Plot Point can occur at any time after Stochastic Effects.*

A research team conducting a geological survey along the Fall is several days late checking in with their coordinator. Since the heroes are rookies, JumpSec assigns them what seems to be a simple task. They are to visit the site and verify everything's okay. (The rangers can receive this assignment while they're in Ralston or at any time they're already in the field.)

## DOING THEIR HOMEWORK

If the characters are in Ralston, they can visit Dr. Till Markham, the scientists' local contact before departing, if they wish. Dr. Markham, an older man, is a geologist himself. He facilitates contact with the various universities and colleges, as well as passes along personal correspondence for the members in the field, using the single interplanetary relay, located in Ralston. He also handles any logistical matters for the expedition.

He's very open and forthcoming about the team's endeavors. The researchers are members of various institutions of higher learning, located throughout the Known Worlds, who are collaborating on a study of Leviathan's geology. The Fall presents an excellent opportunity to



study a cross-section of the planet's rock strata without the need for extensive drilling, and the team is handling nearly as many different research projects as there are individual members. All of them are involved with particularly esoteric aspects of the study of planetary geology, which is probably uninteresting to non-academic heroes.

The team usually checks in every two to three days, sending status reports and personal messages to their respective home worlds. Supply runs are scheduled as needed, and the last one occurred five days ago. At that time, everything seemed to be fine.

## MASSACRE!

The Foundation has been monitoring all transmissions originating along the Fall to ensure it receives ample warning of anyone getting too close to its discovery. The company's eavesdropping picked up the reports coming from the academic expedition. The last thing the Foundation wanted poking around the region was a group of nosy scientists, so it began monitoring their activities very closely.

A little less than a week ago, one of the geologists stumbled onto what she believed to be an irregular vein of minerals. The compounds were unusually high in silicates, and the researcher began feeding data back to her institution, hoping to be able to be able to reconcile the find with previous geological models she'd been constructing for her doctoral thesis. She'd actually stumbled onto remnants of the gth-kel nanites that had been shifted westward from the probe's original landing site by tectonic movement.

Thanks to its own earlier discovery, the Foundation realized the geologist had uncovered some trace remnants from the alien artifact, moved westward by millennia's worth of tectonic drift. It also knew that if the research team continued their own studies, they'd soon identify the nature of their discovery—which would inevitably lead to someone uncovering the actual probe before their own plans could come to fruition. The Foundation quickly dispatched Natural Order terrorists to eliminate the scientists and eradicate their data before they could make any further progress.

## GHOST CAMP

The research site is on the north, or upper, side of the Fall. It lies in a fairly mountainous region, alongside a stream in a steep-walled valley. The landing area is a short distance from the camp proper, but within sight.

Arriving at the camp, it's immediately obvious something has gone terribly wrong. Even a simple flyby tells the spacers there's a major problem. Tents and other portable structures are torn, equipment is scattered around the area, and a few bodies are lying in the open.

Landing, the heroes find more signs the camp has fallen victim to an attack of some sort. Notice rolls spot laser burns on some of the temporary shelters, and the word "NO" is painted on a few of the intact tent walls that remain.

A small number of anklebiters are picking over the corpses when the group arrives. The animals are relatively easy to chase off and flee if attacked, fighting only if cornered. Checking the bodies of the slain researchers reveals they were killed by laser fire, or in a few cases, machete wounds. Some, however, appear to have fallen from a great height. A successful Knowledge (Medicine) or Healing roll determines that the fall occurred post-mortem.

- **Anklebiters (2, plus 1 per hero):** See page 81.

## DEATH FROM ABOVE

Most technological gear has been pilfered or dismantled, possibly for parts. A Smarts roll leads an explorer to realize that although the team's computers have been smashed, every hard drive has been removed. If the heroes search for any research notes, they find no field notes or documentation of any kind relating to the experiments being conducted by any of the teams. Only empty notebooks, file folders, and the like remain scattered throughout the tents.

A successful Tracking roll finds a single pair of soft-soled shoes leading up a steep-sided draw, away from the camp. There are several sets of tracks, all made by the same pair of shoes, indicating the individual has visited the camp several times over the last few days. A raise on the Tracking roll finds a number of heavy boot prints leading to and from the designated hopper landing site.

Before the heroes have a chance to follow the tracks (if they're so inclined), have them make Notice rolls. A young woman steps out of hiding



in rocks further up the draw, pointing upwards and yelling, “Look out!” Those who fail the Notice roll are surprised by the flock of drakes diving on them from above.

The lacerauns have been drawn to the area by the smell of decay from the corpses and are taking the opportunity to get some fresher meat. The creatures begin the attack by swooping down from the cliff walls, gaining a +4 damage bonus to any attack that hits in the first round. Afterward, they are reduced to fighting on the ground. The animals attack until half of their number or more is Incapacitated, then attempt to flee by scaling the cliffs beside the camp.

- **Drakes (1, plus 1 per hero):** See page 85.

## SOLE SURVIVOR

Once the rangers have defeated the airborne lacerauns, the young woman comes down into camp. She’s dressed in a jumpsuit similar to those worn by the dead researchers and carrying a laser pistol. While she’s a little worse for wear, she appears uninjured.

She identifies herself as Kerr Langstrom, a grad student from the Phoenix Institute for Interplanetary Studies working on her doctoral

thesis in plate tectonics. As soon as she realizes the rangers are a search team from Ralston, she quickly tells the group what happened.

*“A hopper landed here four days ago. We thought it was an unscheduled supply flight, but a gang of armed men poured off. They just started shooting as soon as they got on the ground.*

*“I managed to hide before they spotted me. They tore the site apart, burned all our field notes, pulled the drives from our computers and smashed them, and took anything left of any value—and there wasn’t much. Just our personal belongings.*

*“They painted “NO DEFILERS” all around the camp. My best guess is they were eco-terrorists or some other nutjob, but they never said anything. They just killed...”*

She goes on to explain she hid out hoping to be found by a supply flight or rescue party. The drakes had arrived a day or so ago. They’d been drawn by her friends’ bodies and had gotten one or two before she was able to drive them off with her pistol.





## LESSON REVIEW

Langstrom is ecstatic to be rescued, but this is balanced by her grief at the loss of her co-workers, some of whom had become dear friends. She has no idea why the terrorists attacked the research site. None of her peers were associated with any corporation or government, and nothing they were working on was of any commercial value. Furthermore, should the heroes ask, she says their experiments were far less invasive or damaging to the environment than even a single hunting expedition—nothing that should have drawn the ire of activists.

In parting, she tells the characters she's going to remain on planet for a little while to try to collate the data she had gathered to date in the hopes of salvaging some of her work. She had been forwarding her research to Dr. Markham, so back-ups of her efforts exist, at least up until a few days before the attack. If they have any further questions, they can find her at the low-rent hostel in Ralston.

JumpSec is very interested in the rangers' report, as this evidence that the NO has expanded its operations on Leviathan. Until this discovery, JumpSec had assumed the terrorists were likely only active in the vicinity of Ralston. In fact, the chain of command had begun to hope the organization had exhausted itself in the original attack on the capital. Now, they fear the situation is far worse than suspected.

## PART FOUR: PROPAGATION

*Run this Plot Point at any time after Exposure.*

A hopper's emergency beacon triggered in Lower Vesta, but attempts at radio contact failed. It shut off less than five minutes after the broadcast, suggesting a catastrophic accident. The team is sent to investigate and render aid.

## UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

With JumpSec distracted by Natural Order attacks, the Foundation started excavating the gth-kel probe. Their initial exploratory efforts momentarily triggered the probe's long-dormant systems. At that point the team erected a static repeller fence. But they did so only to ward off the local fauna, as they had no idea of the danger posed by the gth-kel artifact.

The brief activation released a few small nanite swarms that went undetected by the researchers'

instruments. These escaped to infect laceraun hosts, which then spread outward to other creatures along random, but ever-expanding routes deeper into the jungles of Lower Vesta.

Schlacter, intrigued by the fleeting activity his researchers recorded when they first unearthed the alien artifact, had the device transported back to his corporation's facility in Borea. The field team returned to Borea with the gth-kel probe, and the Natural Order terrorists maintained their hidden camp near the original dig site. Still unknown to the scientists, nanites previously kept at bay by the static repeller fence around the dig site were released to into the surrounding jungle.

## BACKFIRE

The Natural Order guerrillas were infected by the microscopic robots within days of the Foundation's departure. As the corporation minimized its contact with his hired terrorists, the Borea facility remained unaware of the developments. The next contact they had with the Natural Order was when a Foundation hopper made a run to drop off a resupply of arms and equipment to the terrorists. The crew did not realize anything was amiss before they landed.

When the nanite-controlled guerrillas attacked, the Foundation crew fled, but not before being infected themselves. Operating under strict radio silence to preserve the secrecy of their employer's involvement with the terrorists, the crew did not think to transmit a warning before it was too late. Long before they reached Borea, the nanites overwhelmed the crew and began dismantling many of the hopper's vital systems. The two events, occurring almost simultaneously, prevented any call for help beyond the automated emergency beacon that activated as the aircraft went down into the jungle.

## MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

By the time the heroes are in the air, the emergency beacon has long since stopped broadcasting. However, JumpSec logged the coordinates of the signal and transferred it to the team's navigational equipment. The downed hopper is in Lower Vesta, not far from the coastline bordering the Sluice.

Upon reaching the crash site, the aircraft appears largely intact. The rangers can make out the registration number of the hopper. If they check the number with JumpSec Ops, they find it is a Schlacter Foundation vehicle. Oddly,



## DRONE TEMPLATE

Creatures and characters that have been compromised by the gth-kel nanites become mindless drones under the control of the alien probe. Apply the following changes to any newly converted organisms to represent the effect this has on the creature. Lacerauns and colemata altered by the nanites are no longer affected by Powers and Edges that influence normal animals.

- Reduce the creature's Smarts to d4. However, even if the host formerly possessed only animal intelligence (A), it loses that stipulation thanks to the nanites' programming.
- Its Toughness is increased by 1.
- It gains the Construct Special Ability from *Savage Worlds* (i.e., +2 to recover from Shaken; no additional damage from called shots; immune to poison and disease).
- It gains the Infection Special Ability. Any victim wounded by the creature's natural weaponry must make a Vigor roll or become infected with nanites (see the **Nanite Infection** sidebar on page 45).
- A drone gains **Weakness (Electricity)**. Contact with powerful electrical fields, such as a static repeller field (but not a personal repeller) or a laceraun prod, provoke a Vigor roll (-4) as the nanites in the drone's body are shorted out. Failure on the roll indicates instant death. With success the creature is Shaken, and on a raise is unaffected. Electrically based attacks do an additional 2d6 damage.

JumpSec reports, the Foundation has not reported any missing aircraft—nor have they responded to any queries over the crashed hopper.

## THERE IS INFECTION HERE

There are no immediate signs of survivors, but as soon as any member of the team approaches the hopper, the side hatch opens and several humans in Foundation flight suits emerge. The men's clothing shows tears, burns, and in many cases, bloodstains. The crewmembers don't hail or respond to any attempts to contact them, but walk stiffly toward the rangers.

The crew has been completely infected by the nanites. The gth-kel programming regards the heroes as just another tool to be co-opted, compelling what are little more than ambulatory corpses of the former Foundation employees to try to infect the new "meat." The probe, having never encountered humans or human weapons, does not understand their use—yet. The drones instead rely on the relatively ineffective natural weapons of humans, namely biting (Str).

The drone crew does not surrender nor offer it. In fact, they say nothing, don't respond to any questions or command, or do anything but single-mindedly attack. They don't even breathe heavily as they try to overpower the rangers. Personal repeller fields keep the nanites from affecting the heroes—as long as they have them on, they're fine.

- **Drones (4):** Use the stats for Thug from the *Science Fiction Companion* to represent the nanites' unskilled control of the former technicians, but apply the Drone template (see sidebar). No equipment or weapons.

## TO BEAR ARMS

After the team defeats the drones, they can do a more thorough survey of the crash site and "survivors."

A Healing or Knowledge (Medicine) roll tells the team that none of the Foundation personnel show any wounds other than damage sustained during the crash. Any of the infected they managed to capture without killing display a slightly higher than normal body temperature and a grayish tint to the skin and whites of their eyes. Other than their extreme aggression, there is no other visible clue to the nature of their condition.

A ranger checking the interior of the hopper can make a Notice roll. With a success, he discovers an oily residue covering many of the surfaces. They may recognize this as the same substance that was present at the destroyed hunting lodge in **Exposure** (page 40).



Should a spacer think to examine the navigational computer in the hopper, she finds it is malfunctioning and on the verge of completely crashing. With a Knowledge (Electronics), Knowledge (Computer), or Piloting roll, she can retrieve the last flight plan of the aircraft. The hopper was en route to the Foundation facility in Borea, departing from an unnamed location along the Fall. This is the site of both the NO's main camp and the dig site, but it is not labeled. Schlacter has erected very sophisticated cloaking fields over both locations, making them effectively undetectable from above, either by sensors or direct visual observation.

Any hero examining the cargo compartment of the hopper finds over a dozen crates. Inside, there are a number of laser rifles, SMGs, particle packs, and fragmentation grenades. If a spacer closely examines the weapons, she finds all identifying marks, such as serial numbers, have been removed.

An explorer who takes a look at the hopper's control panels or other systems may make a Repair roll. With a success, he discovers that several components necessary for flight are missing. On a raise, he realizes that some of the absent components appear to have simply vanished. The missing parts could not have been removed without taking apart the aircraft—and there's no way the parts could have been removed and then the disassembled structures put back together while the hopper was in flight.

## YOU'RE NOT WELCOME

Once the team's had time to poke around the crash site, a second Foundation hopper armed with heavy missiles arrives, touching down near the wreck. A corporate security team in Foundation uniforms disembarks and spreads out in a not-so-subtle show of force. The leader of the team steps forward and identifies himself as a Foundation representative. He then politely, but firmly, says,

*"We will handle the recovery of this aircraft and the crew from this point on. While the Schlacter Foundation thanks you for your assistance, your team's presence is no longer required—or welcome—here."*

The leader says his team will transport the remains (and any survivors) back to the Foundation facility where they will coordinate arrangements with any family members or legal heirs. He also insists on taking custody of the downed aircraft and any cargo, claiming it

## NANITE INFECTION

The nanites from the gth-kel probe either break down any resources into usable components or repurpose living organisms to further its original mission of planetscaping Leviathan. Repurposed organisms have their nervous systems and vital organs effectively replaced by nanite constructions. In effect, this turns them into organic robots, driven by the probe's programming.

The gth-kel nanites can infect a victim through one of two ways: direct exposure to a nanite swarm (Vigor -2, see p. 60) or through the attacks of a drone (Vigor check, see sidebar at left).

**Lacerauns:** Due to a natural weakness to electrical fields, lacerauns suffer a -4 to Vigor rolls to resist the gth-kel infection from either swarm or drone attacks.

**Armor:** A victim struck by any melee or ranged attack from a drone is at risk of infection. If the damage exceeds the armor value of any non-natural armor, he must make a Vigor roll or be infected himself. For example, an infected mauler bites a ranger wearing body armor (Armor +4), doing 3 points of damage. This is not greater than the Armor value, so the hero doesn't have to make a roll to resist the nanites. If the infected mauler instead bites another laceraun, the victim animal's natural armor provides no protection against infection.

corporate property and possessing information of a confidential nature. The man cites several obscure contractual references to the leasing agreement the Foundation signed with Vestal.

Should spacers question him regarding the weapons, he insists they were to bolster the Foundation's own security forces. He says that the increased activity by the Natural Order terrorists has caused his employers considerable concern—especially in light of JumpSec's seeming inability to prevent the attacks.

If the rangers balk at turning over the crash or any of the infected, he adds, *"The cause of the crash was mundane, but related to a matter the Foundation considers to be confidential and proprietary in nature."*



## NANITE INFECTION (CONT.)

**Repeller Fields:** Luckily for most off-world visitors to Leviathan, the handy personal repellers and static repeller fields neutralize nanites that come in contact with it. Anyone wearing a personal repeller is immune to infection as long as the device functions and anyone who remains within the boundaries of a static repeller field is completely shielded from them.

**Cure:** In 1d4 hours after infection, the victim's body is completely overwhelmed and he gains the Drone template (see the **Drone template** sidebar on page 44). Before the transformation is complete, a victim can be purged of the nanites by a strong electrical shock. The trick is not killing the patient while administering the cure. The shock must be strong enough to incapacitate the infected character—the nanites recover from anything less.

A feedback loop burns out the nanites inside any drone who suffers damage to be Incapacitated. While this also results in the creature's death, it does mean the corpse is no longer a vector for infection itself, although it can be reinfected and reanimated. Due to their size and alien origin, the nanites are effectively undetectable unless an examiner is specifically looking for them, even in the remains of a drone.

*You may rest assured we will keep both JumpSec and Vestal Interplanetary updated as to the outcome of our own assessment, should there be any reason for wider concern—which there isn't."*

He encourages the rangers to check with their superiors. If they do, the dispatcher at JumpSec Ops tells them, in a somewhat surprised voice, that Vestal Interplanetary has confirmed the Foundation's claim to the downed hopper, the crew members—alive and dead—and even temporarily to the crash site itself. In short, the heroes are ordered to stand down and return to Ralston.

Assuming the rangers turn the vehicle and remains over to the Foundation team, the security

operatives place the bodies in sealed bags and load them on their hopper. They scour the interior of the crashed aircraft, then place thermal charges on it. The explosives reduce the entire vehicle and its contents to molten slag, destroying all evidence of the nanites and weapons.

## SHOOT 'EM UP

A maverick group may decide to force a confrontation with the Foundation's security team. If so, the Foundation personnel do not hesitate to engage the group in combat. The security force is well armed and trained. The team leader is actually one of the Foundation's surgically created psionics, and he uses his ability when appropriate to protect himself or his subordinates.

If more than two-thirds of the security team is Incapacitated, the remainder attempt to return to their hopper and leave. Even if the survivors can't reach the aircraft, the pilot takes off and fires two light missiles at the downed hopper. Any rangers nearby may be caught in the blast if they're too close!

Should the spacers instead be forced to retreat, the Foundation team secures the site and proceeds as detailed previously.

★ **Team Leader:** Use the stats for Psionicist from the *Science Fiction Companion*. Laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2), combat armor (+6).

• **Security Team Member (4, plus 1 per hero):** Use the stats for Soldier from the *Science Fiction Companion*. Laser SMG (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d8+2, RoF 3, AP 2), combat armor (+6) two spare particle packs, 2 × thermal grenades (Range 5/10/20, Damage 3d10, HW), survival knife (Str+d4).

## CURIOUSER AND CURIOUSER

Although JumpSec ordered the team to stand down on instruction from Vestal's legal team, it doesn't brush off the events in Lower Vesta. It takes note of both aspects of the ranger's report on the downed Foundation hopper.

The presence of the erratically behaving crew spawns concerns that some unknown disease has crossed the species barrier and may threaten other residents and visitors.



The presence of the scrubbed lasers raises some questions, as well. Lasers and grenades don't have the punch to bring down the larger lacerauns, which means they're most likely going to be used in an anti-personnel role. The Foundation's security force is nowhere near large enough to require a resupply of weapons in the amounts the rangers observed. Those facts together get JumpSec to asking exactly to whom were the weapons being delivered...

## FOUNDATION'S WOES

All is not well on the other side of the table, either. Emil Schlacter learned of the downed hopper only after JumpSec dispatched the heroes. He discovered his primary facility went offline at the same time. He is concerned about the fate of the Foundation compound, but his first priority was making sure the JumpSec rangers didn't get their hands on anything that could expose his connection to the Natural Order or the alien artifact he's trying to seize.

The Schlacter Foundation's facility is completely overrun by infected humans and is being broken down for resources. The nanites will soon begin returning to the gth-kel device in preparation for planetscaping operations. Although Schlacter doesn't understand the primary function of the probe, he was able to gather enough data from his researchers in Borea, to learn of the nanites existence. He also has identified their weakness to repeller fields. He has ordered one to be erected around the probe, in the hopes of preventing a similar disaster at the field site.

## PART FIVE: OUTBREAK

*This Plot Point can occur at any time after **Exposure**.*

The spacers are tasked to make an assessment of the damage to a Vestal hunting lodge caused by a laceraun stampede. In light of recent events, JumpSec makes no bones about the fact it fears Natural Order activity. The actual cause is far more sinister and dangerous.

A group of infected lacerauns moved into the area near the lodge. In the process of infecting other animals and harvesting any usable materials, the drones were drawn to the lodge by its manufactured materials. Containing numerous compounds that would otherwise have to be converted from base elements, the lodge drew the nanites like bees to honey.

## AMONG THE RUINS

A hunting guide filed a report with JumpSec regarding the discovery of a badly damaged lodge and refueling station in Lower Vesta, near the eastern coast, about 100 miles south of the Fall. The guide visited the lodge to prep for an upcoming expedition of off-world sportsmen. When he arrived, he discovered it nearly destroyed and found the tracks of a large group of lacerauns who had likely trampled it during a panicked rush.

The lodge is located near a coastal salt marsh, but on dry ground. There is a cleared area for landing a skimmer about 50 yards from the building. The house itself was fairly large, being built to serve as living quarters to up to a dozen people at a time.

It includes three bunkrooms, a kitchen, great hall, and two bathrooms. Like many such buildings on the planet, the building's architecture was designed to look like an old Earth hunting lodge. Although constructed of modular, polymer materials, it looks—and even feels—like a rustic log cabin.

The lodge is almost completely leveled. Pieces of the walls, furniture, and other fixtures lie scattered around the foundation and on the surrounding ground. Very few items remain standing outside of a couple of corner support columns.

## PIECES TO THE PUZZLE

Once the team starts looking around the ruins, things do not add up. A Tracking roll finds dozens of laceraun tracks, exactly as the guide reported. The tracks belong to several different species, both carnivores and herbivores. More curiously, there is no evidence of any predatory activity between the creatures.

Any ranger picking through the remains of the lodge may make a Notice roll. With a success, she spots signs the building wasn't haphazardly knocked down. The damage is too complete and the debris is scattered evenly around the area, rather than in a single direction as one would expect if a stampede overran the structure.

A raise on the roll finds that mechanical and electronic devices in the ruins appear to have been dismantled. Most are missing several pieces. In fact, some of the building's construction materials seem to be missing. There certainly aren't enough materials on hand to rebuild the structure.



A hero who closely examines any of the objects from the ruins may make a Notice roll. On a success, she finds many of the damaged items and materials in the lodge have traces of an almost oily residue on them. This is comprised of a variety of simple compounds neither incorporated nor used by the nanites, which is leftover from their processing process, but only a detailed chemical analysis reveals this. And even once the composition of the substance is identified, the ramifications only become clear once the rangers have uncovered the existence of the nanites themselves.

Before the team has time to mull over the implications of their discovery, a pack of scrats pours out from nooks and crannies in the debris. Unlike the explorers might expect from the tiny scavengers, the scrats attack! The scrats have been infected with gth-kel nanites. Remember, as long as the rangers are wearing personal repellers, they are immune to the creatures' Infection Special Ability.

- **Drone Scrats (2, plus 2 per hero):** Use the stats for Scrat (page 89). Modify the base profile with the Drone template on page 44.

## THE CAVALRY HAS ARRIVED, JUST NOT OURS!

The scrats pose little threat to the heroes, even though infected by gth-kel nanites. One thing the nanites enable the creatures to do, which normal lacerauns can't, is call for help—and help isn't that far away.

After a few rounds of combat—right about the time when the rangers undeniably have the upper hand—have the characters make a Notice roll. Those who succeed get a round of warning that something is crashing through the undergrowth heading right toward them. More appropriately, *several* somethings are bearing down on them.

The next round, a small herd of lacerauns bursts into the clearing surrounding the ruins. It's not just grazers in the herd, there are some maulers and even a krok in the mix, and the creatures are clearly intent on doing the heroes harm. The lacerauns move with an unexpected and disturbing degree of determination. The creatures charge like a pack of wolves going after a wounded elk.

The drone lacerauns fight to the death, neither surrendering nor retreating. The probe has never encountered creatures resistant to nanite infection. It has yet to identify the reason for the rangers' immunity and sees them as threats to be eliminated.

- **Drone Grazers (3, plus 1 per hero):** Use the stats for Grazer on page 85, modified by the Drone template on page 44.
- **Drone Maulers (1 per hero):** Use the stats for Mauler on page 86, modified by the Drone template on page 44.
- **Drone Krok (1):** Use the stats for Krok on page 86, modified by the Drone template on page 44.

## OFFICIAL EXPLANATIONS

A visual examination of the infected animals detects no sign of the nanite infection. As long as none of the rangers were infected in the attack, the heroes likely have little clue as to what was actually motivating the lacerauns to act so strangely. Even if one of the characters succumbs to the nanites through some twist of bad luck, the doomed explorer's fate is easily explained as some form of weird "space rabies," since it's unlikely the rangers have the equipment on hand to test for alien robots less than a tenth of a micrometer in size.

JumpSec and Vestal's wildlife management department are very interested in the heroes' account of the lacerauns' behavior. Vestal requests the team return one of the carcasses to Ralston for testing, for a possibly heretofore undiscovered disease. JumpSec, on the other hand, puts its credits on Natural Order being involved in the event. The corporate security specialists don't have a firm theory as to how, but they field everything from psionics to biological agents to mind-control implants.

If the team has completed the Plot Point **Exposure** (page 40), both JumpSec and Vestal become *very* concerned about a possible epidemic threatening both laceraun and off-world life alike. The two take the situation very seriously and step up attempts to analyze the presumed pathogens responsible.



## PART SIX: DIAGNOSIS

*This Plot Point takes place sometime after the team has completed all the preceding Plot Points.*

JumpSec has its sights set on a location in Lower Vesta at the edge of the Fall, as a potential site for the primary Natural Order stronghold. The rangers are assigned to lead a squad of JumpSec officers in an attempt to cut the head off of the terrorists' organization on Leviathan.

### ALL SIGNS POINT HERE

The heroes are called into Ralston for a personal briefing from high-ranking members of JumpSec's operational staff on Leviathan. Working from the discovery the heroes made in **Propagation**, company analysts strongly believe the arms shipment they found on the crashed Foundation shuttle was intended for the guerrillas. So far, this is only a little more than suspicion, so JumpSec doesn't dare move against the Foundation without more evidence.

The analysts have reconstructed the hopper's likely flight path prior to the crash using satellite telemetry, transponder activations, and a bit of mathematical magic. They've settled on a likely spot in the lower reaches of the Fall for a major, possibly even the primary, base for Natural Order operations on the planet. Orbital scans reveal nothing out of the ordinary, but the intelligence specialists also acknowledge it would be a relatively simple matter to shield a site from the primitive scanners available to JumpSec Ops on Leviathan. That's not even factoring in the assistance of a triple-canopy jungle.

JumpSec wants the rangers to lead a reconnaissance in search of the terrorist base.

### INTERNAL SECURITY

The corporation doesn't expect the spacers to handle the mission on their own. JumpSec sends a full squad of security officers with the heroes to provide support if required. While their primary goal is gathering intel, the staff is concerned that the Natural Order guerrillas may abandon the camp once detected, and they make it clear that all measures to prevent this from happening are authorized. JumpSec wants the team to know going into the assignment that lasers don't have a stun setting.

Treat the squad as allies (see **Allies** in *Savage Worlds*).

- **Security Officers (9):** Use the stats for JumpSec Security officer (page 93). Armed with laser SMGs (Range 50/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 4, AP 2) and 3 extra particle packs.
- **Medic:** Use the stats for JumpSec Paramedic (page 93).

### ZEROING IN

The analysts did a good job, but they could only narrow the coordinates down so far. Once the rangers get close, it's up to them to actually pinpoint the exact location. There are two ways they can do this: either by a visual search from the air or landing and working their way overland.

The high road might seem the easier route, but the team is warned before departing JumpSec does not have accurate intel on the type of ordinance available to the terrorists. It is possible the guerrillas have gotten their hands on surface-to-air missiles. If the heroes have played the *Savage Tale Mission of Mercy*, they know this to be not only possible, but a fact. (Of course, what no one at JumpSec knows is that the Natural Order has been effectively destroyed by nanite infection, so a SAM is the least of the team's worries.)

Spotting the base from the air isn't a walk in the park. The jungle does a good job of hiding things on the ground. Virtually the only chance the team has of catching sight of the encampment is by flying almost directly overhead—and looking down at the right time. Each hour of searching, allow the rangers a single Notice roll at a -4 penalty. Up to two heroes can cooperate to assist the lead lookout in this roll. With a success, the team manages to find the terrorists' hideout.

On the ground, it's a much longer process and also more likely to result in the spacers running afoul of the not-so-natural dangers left in the area. Every four hours, the rangers can make a cooperative Tracking roll at a -4 penalty or a Notice roll at a -8 penalty. With a success they've stumbled across a trail leading to the Natural Order encampment.

Although the gth-kel probe is now a continent away, the microbots are continuing to convert and repurpose the planet's resources. The area surrounding the dig site is crawling with infected wildlife. Every two hours, roll on the Lower Vesta Encounter Table (page 27), but apply the Drone template (page 44) to any creature the heroes encounter. Treat results of Survival Cache or Tropical Storm as No Encounter.



## END OF AN ORDER

To keep as low a profile as possible against sensor scans, the terrorists did not employ static repeller fields. Their personal repellers shielded them from the nanobots for a while, but not long after the Foundation personnel departed, the invisible scavengers began breaking down the camp generators. When the generators went down and the last charge drained from their repeller batteries, the terrorists quickly succumbed to the alien infection.

Not all the batteries drained at the same time, so a few of the hired guns lived long enough to see their comrades-in-arms have their minds overwritten by a millennia-old alien horror. The last few survivors put up a valiant fight, but in the end they too were conscripted to the gth-kel cause when their own repellers failed. Unfortunately for the rest of Leviathan, their resistance was incorporated by the nanites' programming.

## LITTLE CAMP OF HORRORS

Once the team locates the Natural Order encampment, their fun has just begun. There is very little in the way of defenses as heroes approach, whether by air or land—except the occasional alien-controlled dinosaur zombie, of course. There are no air defenses in place, and if approaching from the jungle, the rangers see no evidence of sentries or sensors.

The camp itself is in a state of disarray that makes the dismantled hunting lodge they found in look downright homey. The Natural Order guerrillas lived out of tents, and those are shredded or simply collapsed. Storage containers are overturned with their contents spilled haphazardly. A hero making a Notice roll sees

the same oily residue they found at the crashed Foundation hopper and dismantled hunting lodge on most of the surfaces and the vegetation in the area.

The spacers spot several bodies lying around the campsite. While searching the camp some of the “dead” start standing up. The heroes notice that something is very, very wrong with the one-time guerrillas. They are obviously now something more, or more correctly less, than human. The first time the rangers and their allies get a look at the horrific drones, they must make a Fear check.

One thing about the infection's programming that hasn't changed is that the drones don't retreat or surrender.

- **Improved Drone (10, plus 2 per hero):** See sidebar on page 51. Half are equipped with laser SMGs (Range 50/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 4, AP 2) and the others with laser pistols (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2).

## WHAT IS GOING ON HERE?

When the team has time to search through the site, they find a treasure trove of material. There are no intact weapons, beyond those fused into the drones. Any piece of equipment more advanced than a mechanic's wrench is pulled apart, with its components scattered or missing, but there are still a number of documents in paper form. One of these is a map showing the locations of several smaller Natural Order camps, several of which are near the planet's main settlements.

The drone activity in the area begins to pick up as the infection becomes aware of the team's presence. Every ten minutes the rangers and their allies spend in the area, roll on the Encounter





table as detailed in **Zeroing In** above. The heroes may also discover their radio communications are completely disrupted while in this part of Lower Vesta—a side effect of the volume of radio and electrical waves in the area due to the large number of nanites.

A Notice or Tracking roll detects a fairly well-traveled trail leading from the camp to the east. The trail is about two miles long and leads to the original location of the gth-kel artifact. The Foundation removed all their gear, but there remains a deep shaft surrounded by an obviously cleared area where a number of people camped for several weeks.

The shaft itself is about 30 feet across and descends roughly 70 feet to the bottom. The walls are sheer and require a Climbing roll at a -2 penalty to descend safely. There is no readily visible evidence at the dig site or in the shaft. If the adventurers think to take rock samples from the bottom of the shaft, scientists at Ralston can date the age of the strata. These would also provide confirmation of the connection between this location and the scene of the massacre in **Exposure**, but it's not necessary for the advancement of the Plot Point Campaign.

### AFTER-ACTION REPORT

While the Natural Order chain of command may have already been decapitated before the rangers' strike on their base, the information they brought back from the assault proves invaluable. If they discovered the maps showing the other terrorist lairs, JumpSec wastes no time in dispatching strike teams to those locations. However, the true value of their effort is in the discovery that something far more sinister than a simple disease is at work on Leviathan.

The drastically altered guerrilla bodies alone are enough to convince the corporate hierarchy that there is an unknown factor at play. If the heroes found the dig site—or better yet, brought back rock samples—JumpSec has a further leg up on ferreting out the truth. Regardless, their superiors are impressed and grateful for the team's efforts.

While the team is certainly deserving of some downtime, things on Leviathan are quickly taking a turn for the worse.

## IMPROVED DRONE

The gth-kel infection program has evolved thanks to encounters with the rangers and Natural Order terrorists. The nanites have fused the guerrillas' lasers directly into their arms, which draw ammunition from the drones' bodies. They've also upgraded their drones' bodies, incorporating metallic and polymer compounds.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

### Special Abilities:

- **Bite/Claw:** Str+d4. A drone's nails and teeth are laced with polymers and/or metal.
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from Shaken; no additional damage from called shots; immune to poison and disease.
- **Infection:** Any victim wounded by a drone's natural weaponry must make a Vigor roll or become infected by gth-kel nanites (see the **Nanite Infection** sidebar on page 45).
- **Integrated Weaponry:** An improved drone often has a ranged weapon fused to an arm. The weapon uses the same stats as regular versions except it has unlimited ammunition.
- **Weakness (Electricity):** Any drone that comes in contact with a powerful electrical field, such as a static repeller field (but not a personal repeller) or laceraun prod, must make a Vigor roll at -4 or die as the nanites in its body are shorted out. On a success, the creature is Shaken, and on a raise, it is unaffected.



## PART SEVEN: QUARANTINE

*This Plot Point should occur only after the team completes **Diagnosis**.*

The situation in Borea has become critical. JumpSec has decoded the mystery behind the strange disease and sends the rangers to help with the evacuation of that continent.

### ENIGMA UNWRAPPED

The team is called to a briefing at JumpSec headquarters in Ralston. The rangers find themselves ushered into a conference room so large it's better described as a theater. It looks like nearly every member of the JumpSec detachment on Leviathan is present. Once everyone is seated, Colonel Randy Jaks, the commander of planetary operations, enters and begins speaking. His presentation is punctuated by photographs from field operations on a huge screen behind him, many of which the heroes experienced first-hand.

*"Working with Vestal researchers, we have unraveled the secret behind the infection. Thanks to input from an off-planet geologist, Dr. Kerr Langstrom, we've determined the 'disease' many of you have encountered in the field is actually caused by nanorobots."*

There's a brief pause as a burst of conversation rolls through the audience. Some members seem shocked, while others are distracted asking their neighbors exactly what a nanorobot is. After things settle down, Colonel Jaks continues.

### WE ALREADY KNEW THAT!

It's possible the heroes have already put together some, or even all, of the clues they've discovered and figured out the secret of the nanites on their own. If they have—and they thought to share it with JumpSec—the officer calls them out by name in the briefing, thanking them profusely for their efforts. However, clever deductions deserve a little more than just a pat on the back in our book. If your rangers managed to sort out the nature of the threat on their own, we recommend you reward them with an extra benny each at the beginning of any remaining sessions of Plot Point Campaign.

*"Worse, these nanites are apparently of extraterrestrial origin. The data one of our assault teams brought back from the abandoned dig site, correlated exactly with anomalous readings a geological survey discovered before being wiped out by Natural Order terrorists. The age of the rock strata containing the initial sample leads us to believe that the origin of the nanites predates life on Leviathan, at least outside of the oceans."*

*"While the people with the big brains have never seen the likes of the microscopic, alien robots, so far they have determined that the nanites exist primarily to replicate themselves. Left unchecked, the entire planet—and its inhabitants—may well be converted into either nanites or the oily waste product they leave behind."*

*"We've also determined the nanites are susceptible to powerful electrical fields. While this makes Leviathan's denizens particularly vulnerable, it means that functioning static repellers provide some protection against the alien infection. We also believe that doing enough damage to a victim of the infection—which we're calling 'drones'—shorts out the nanites inside, due to feedback surges."*

### MARCHING ORDERS

A map of Borea appears on the large screen.

*"Satellite recon has detected a large surge in broadcast activity on a frequency we've come to associate with concentrations of these alien nanites centered in Borea. We are mandating a continent-wide evacuation. Most of our resources—that means you people—are going to be sent there to expedite. You'll be receiving your specific orders immediately following this briefing."*

*"Hopefully, it goes without saying that we'd rather play this one close to the vest for now. Rumors of tiny, alien robots devouring everything in their path might lead to a bit of civil unrest with which we're currently unprepared to deal with. JumpSec wants you to remain silent on this until we've developed a strategy for revealing this to the public at large."*

While he continues speaking for a couple of minutes, nothing else of substance is presented. True to Colonel Jaks' words, the rangers get their assignment within moments of the briefing's conclusion. It seems the flurry of radiowaves that tipped off JumpSec to the increased nanite activity is also wreaking havoc on communications across much of the continent.



The heroes are initially tasked with locating a small hunting expedition that is currently in the Amymonian Delta. The expedition hasn't made radio contact since departing Moorland two days ago. Heavy cloud cover has prevented JumpSec from using satellite imaging to observe the planet surface, so the rangers have to go in person. Once the hunters are located, they are to pass along the evacuation order and return to the settlement for their next assignment.

## EVAC!

When the team stops in Moorland for refueling, they quickly discover their communications are indeed unreliable. Contact with even the local settlement is broken and heavily obscured by static. Even their onboard navigation equipment seems to be affected by the interference, and landing at Moorland requires a Piloting roll to avoid mishap. On a failure, the hopper touches down hard, doing 2d6 damage to the craft and passengers.

Allow any spacer who disembarks to make a Notice roll with a -4 penalty. Those who succeed discover a faint oily residue on a couple of the surfaces near the landing pad. If they call this to the attention of anyone outside their own team, they're greeted with mostly blank stares. Remember, JumpSec hasn't explained the nature of the threat to the general populace, so the heroes' explanations are going to sound like technobabble at best.

With reliable comms down and the expedition hopper's onboard beacon signal effectively scrambled by interference, the best the rangers have to work with is the expedition's last known location. Luckily, it's a fairly short trip from Moorland. The hunters were encamped only a few hundred miles east of the settlement.

## INTO THE WOODS

Arriving at the site, the team discovers a garishly painted, guide-company hopper and several tents erected nearby. Again, landing requires a Piloting roll, with failure inflicting 2d6 damage to the hopper and passengers. There is no sign of the hunters. Any attempt to contact the hunting party via radio or satellite comms fails completely due to the increasingly severe interference.

A Notice roll finds evidence of the oily residue over nearly everything. A quick check of the guide's hopper allows a Repair check. On a success, an adventurer can determine the aircraft

is no longer flight-worthy due to the degradation of several vital systems. The rangers can protect their own hopper by deploying static field generators. A skilled mechanic can also rig an integral repeller field on the team's hopper using one of the generators, 1d6 hours' work, and a Repair roll at a -2 penalty. A raise on the roll halves the required time.

All explorers at the site must make a Vigor roll. Those who fail find the air heavy and have difficulty breathing. Any spacer who rolls a 1 on her Vigor die, regardless of the Wild Die, receives a Fatigue level as well. The Fatigue is recovered after an hour in normal atmosphere, such as onboard the hopper or even at Moorland.

This is due to atmospheric changes caused by the gth-kel artifact that is beginning to affect much of Borea and eventually the entire planet unless stopped. It is increasing the methane content while lowering the oxygen content. However, methane is odorless and colorless, so the only way to discover this is through analysis of the atmosphere.

A search of the tents reveals sleeping bags and similar items inside, but no weapons are present. A Tracking roll finds recent boot prints leading out the camp to the west. The tracks themselves appear to have been made sometime within the last day.

Following the trail once located is not difficult. No roll is necessary once the team finds the initial tracks. This is a common camp site for hunting expeditions, and the current group is sticking to a fairly well-traveled path.

## THE CUSTOMER'S ALWAYS WRONG

The hunters are in a blind near a large marshy area four hours down the trail. When the rangers find them, their guide tries to silence the rangers. If they persist, the tourists begin emerging from their hides, one by one, to protest the interruption. The expedition received no evacuation order, and the members insist on waving various permits and licenses at the heroes.

Like most visitors to Leviathan, the hunters are all wealthy and convinced that it gives them special consideration with the authorities. They argue that they've broken no regulations and they've paid considerable sums, to their guide and Vestal Interplanetary, to conduct their hunt. If that fails, they try bribery or simple whining.



Convincing them to return is a **Social Conflict** (see *Savage Worlds*). The spokesperson for the rangers can use either Persuasion or Intimidation to make his points. Any other characters who wish to participate may make a cooperative roll using either skill, even if it's not the same as the one used by the main speaker. The hunters are represented by a single loudmouth with Persuasion d6.

At the end of the debate, if the team wins with at least a single success, the hunters agree to depart with them. Whether grudgingly or gratefully depends on the margin of victory. If they can't best the swampland lawyer, the hunters dig their heels in, insisting they'll leave when they're good and ready.

## THE FALL OF MOORLAND

Moorland, being unprotected by static repeller fields, is particularly susceptible to the nanites. However, as its inhabitants wear personal repellers while outside, there has been no infection of its citizens yet, so the populace is completely unaware of the danger that completely surrounds them by this point. Even JumpSec underestimated the extent to which the alien infection has spread—but the heroes are about to learn the hard way that things are much worse than they seem at a glance.

As the team sets down at one of Moorland's elevated pads, returning from the swamps, the whole pad starts to crumble beneath the craft, its structural integrity now completely compromised by nanite degradation! The pilot must immediately make a Piloting roll at a -2 penalty, or lose control of the hopper.

On a failure, the hopper and the passengers takes 3d6 damage as it plummets to the marshy ground below and is pelted by falling debris. If there is an upside to the mishap, it's that exiting the vehicle afterward is relatively simple, as the debris from above virtually disappears into the marsh after impact with the aircraft's hull.

There are numerous elevators positioned to allow the heroes to reach the settlement's platform.

## SOUND THE RETREAT

After the team makes it onto to the now-suspect Moorland platform, they find JumpSec has ordered a complete evacuation of Moorland effective immediately. Additionally, there are orders waiting for them in the local JumpSec

barracks. They are to assist in transporting the citizens to a landing zone approximately 150 miles to the north on the shore of the Sea of Fire. Additional air- and watercraft from both Ralston and Altia are en route to ferry the refugees back to the capital.

This is a large-scale operation, and it's all hands on deck. Assuming the heroes' hopper is still flight-worthy, the pilot is to begin shuttle runs to and from the drop zone. The rest of the team is to support operations in Moorland, directing citizens to evac sites and shoring up the crumbling structures.

There are three hoppers functioning in the settlement besides the heroes' aircraft. Each can carry a maximum of 20 passengers. Counting time to load and unload, each trip takes one hour. If the team is reduced to using only the elevated pads for some reason (see **Carpet of Doom**, below), add an additional 20 minutes to that time as the hoppers jockey for landing space.

The team has a minimum of three hours to move as many survivors to the staging area as possible before the settlement collapses due to the damage done by the nanites.

Some of the citizens have already departed, but nearly 700 remain at the time JumpSec gives the emergency order. With the resources at hand, only 180 to 240 of the approximately 700 inhabitants can be evacuated before disaster befalls Moorland—unless the heroes find a way to buy more time.

## EXTENDING THE DEADLINE

The evacuation is a **Dramatic Task** (see *Savage Worlds*), with a few modifications. Each attempt represents one hour of effort by the team. Piloting is the primary skill, rolled at a -2 penalty due to the frequent equipment malfunctions. On a success, the pilot manages to get 20 refugees dropped off and back to Moorland in an hour. A raise means the hero makes the run in near record time, represented by ferrying 10 additional refugees, for a total of 30 refugees. With a failure, mechanical difficulties ground the bird for an hour while emergency repairs are made.

There are two factors working against the rangers and the other rescue workers: mass confusion and panic among the refugees, and degradation of the outpost's structural integrity.

A ranger can devote her efforts to coordinating the evacuees, better organizing the loading



procedures, and convincing reluctant holdouts of the danger facing them. She must spend the entire period of an attempt and make a Persuasion or Intimidation roll. Each success and raise on the roll results in another 10 refugees being rescued this round.

Moorland's structural integrity fails catastrophically at the end of three hours if nothing is done to prevent it, killing or trapping most of the rest of the citizens in the rubble. Once the outpost falls, only 10 refugees per hopper can be rescued in a given attempt, and no further skill rolls can result in extra survivors being rescued, either with Persuasion, Intimidation, or raises on Piloting rolls.

An adventurer can shore up the settlement with a successful Repair roll and an hour of work. The roll is modified by a cumulative -2 for each previous successful Repair roll (-2 on the second, -4 on the third, and so on). Each success and raise adds an hour to the time before the outpost disintegrates, giving the team more time to evacuate survivors.

A character can also assist any of the acting heroes by using the rules for Cooperative Rolls found in *Savage Worlds*.

## CARPET OF DOOM

Regardless of the team's success or failure, at the end of the sixth hour of rescue operations, a nightmare crawls out of the marsh. A swarm of drone death crawlers easily a mile long and two hundred yards wide rolls toward the base of the outpost. Unless delayed, the infected death crawlers cover all open ground—including the hopper landing pads—below the settlement within a half-hour.

If they're made of stern stuff, the rangers can try to stand against the wave of doom to buy the refugees a little more time. The end is inevitable, but a brave group of heroes can stem the tide briefly. Allow the group to engage the swarm however they wish and run the combat as normal. Each Large Burst Template of the drones they manage to defeat earns them another 20 minutes reprieve, as well as adding an additional 10 refugees to the final total.

No matter how hard they fight, it inevitably becomes obvious they're fighting a losing battle and must retreat to the staging area on the coast or become casualties themselves. Any unrescued refugees are lost, as any escaping into the marsh

around the outpost simply delays their demise by a day at the most.

- **Drone Death Crawler Swarm (1):** Use the stats for Death Crawler on page 84, modified by the Drone template on page 44.

## AFTERMATH

The rangers—or at least those who survived—have a little downtime at the staging area on the coast. A small, impromptu tent city is erected to shelter the refugees as they wait out the next day or two for the makeshift rescue fleet to arrive. Feel free to make the heroes nervous about an imminent threat from the alien drones as they wait. However, they are safe for the moment. They can make repairs, treat wounds, or just rest before their next mission.

Calculate the total number of refugees they managed to save. As a base, the other hoppers transported 60 refugees per hour until either Moorland fell apart or the death crawlers overwhelmed the outpost's defenders. The team's aircraft adds another 20 per hour, plus any extra the spacer's pilot managed to secure with raises, plus additional survivors rescued by the rest of the team's efforts.

If the total number of refugees rescued from Moorland is 400 or more, each member of the team receives a bonus Benny at the start of the next Plot Point. If the heroes save 600 or more, each instead receives two bonus Bennies!

## PART EIGHT: PANDEMIC

*This is the final Plot Point and the climax of the Extinction Event campaign. It should only be run after all previous Plot Points have been completed.*

After the retreat from Moorland, the team receives word the source of the alien infection is the Schlacter Foundation's compound on Borea. Unless they are able to deactivate it, it is inevitable the planet will be overrun by nanites before any relief from off world will arrive.

## INTERVENTION

The rangers have about a day before the bulk of the transports arrive at the emergency site to pick up the refugees. It's a good idea for the heroes to make the most of the down time repairing equipment and mending their wounds. It's pretty clear their work on Borea is far from done. A JumpSec team, traveling from Precipice, confirms this.



The team, composed of JumpSec officers, has a trid containing the heroes' new orders. On it, Colonel Jaks speaks directly to the rangers, while various scientific charts and graphs are displayed to highlight his bullet points.

*"Satellite readings have identified an increase in atmospheric methane over most of Borea. This corresponds to a rise in surface temperature in the same area. We now believe the nanites are in the process of planetscaping Leviathan. Although we cannot say what the exact end result will be, it is clear it will not be hospitable to either our species or the indigenous life."*

*"Our computer modeling shows the infestation of nanites is a bigger threat than we originally calculated. They appear to have accelerated their rate of increase and are now growing at exponential numbers. In less than a week, they will have expanded to cover Lower Vesta and reach Altia. In two weeks, they will effectively cover the planet, but long before then the planet will be uninhabitable."*

*"In case you did the math, that's nowhere near enough time for us to get the ships here necessary to evacuate the populace."*

## INTO THE BREACH

The graphics fade and their commander appears.

*"Your team appears to represent the last of our assets on Borea. We have lost contact with all the others, as well as all the teams we transferred from other areas to assist in the evacuation. The remaining JumpSec personnel are completely involved in similar evacuation operations in Altia and other threatened regions. Beyond the security detail accompanying your orders, we can't spare any further personnel to assist you."*

*"Our analysts have identified a pattern in the broadcast traffic across the nanites and drones. Occasional powerful bursts originate from a single location near the center of the methane concentration. These bursts then echo, for lack of a better word, throughout the area infested with nanites. The origin of these bursts is also at the point of the highest concentration of methane—the location of what used to be the Schlacter Foundation's compound."*

*"The tech boys are fielding a theory that the Foundation got their hands on some alien artifact and lost control of it. If that's correct, it may mean the nanites are all under the control of a single device and that short-circuiting that device likewise deactivate the nanites. All this is*

*conjecture and it might add up to a big pile of a-pex squat, but it's all we've got."*

He goes on to explain the JumpSec security detail has with it a pair of EMP missile warheads commandeered from the tiny squadron guarding the Tiamat system. JumpSec has already tried launching a missile at the target from space, but the severe electromagnetic interference in the area knocked out the avionics long before it got close. Given the limited time and resources, the command structure believes the only shot is to fly as close as possible and then have a team take it in overland.

Further complicating the mission, the area is blanketed by heavy cloud cover and erratic thermal patterns—caused by the severe meteorological changes being induced by the planetscaping device. Combined with the electromagnetic interference, JumpSec has been completely thwarted in all attempts to get to the target area. The rangers and their backup are effectively going in blind.

*"We are looking for a Hail Mary here, and you're the team with the ball."*

## TASK FORCE LEVIATHAN

The rangers are given command of the security detail. Their orders are to depart at first light the next day. If the team's own hopper is damaged and can't be repaired before the departure time, they can use the one the detail arrived in. The rangers can't use both aircraft, though, as the other is needed for evacuation duties.

The two warheads have already been removed from their housing and fitted with simple timed detonators. They do minimal physical damage when exploded (2d6, Medium Burst Template), but effectively short-out all electrical and electronic devices within 100 yards of the detonation. Each weighs 50 lb. and is fitted with carrying handles allowing up to two people to carry it.

The detail has enough filtration masks for the rangers and themselves, allowing them to function normally in the methane-rich, oxygen-poor atmosphere near the center of the anomaly.

- **JumpSec Security Officers (4):** See page 93. Three are armed with laser rifles (Range 24/48/96, Damage 2d8+2, RoF 1, AP 2) and four spare particle packs in addition to the standard equipment. The fourth carries a laceraun rifle (Range 50/100/200, Damage 3d10, RoF 1, AP 6,



HW) and 20 spare rounds. They also carry two portable static field generators (small).

- **JumpSec Paramedic (1):** See page 93.

## HEART OF DARKNESS

It's approximately 500 miles from the evacuation site to the Foundation compound. The quickest route to their destination takes the heroes near enough to Moorland to get a look at the ruins. After barely more than a day, little remains of the settlement. The nanites spared no time in harvesting the precious compounds present in the various fabricated materials in the town, leaving only crumbling shells of the former structures to sink into the marsh.

The effects of the alien harvest aren't as evident on the environment for almost another hundred miles. The trees passing beneath the hopper begin to take on a sickly, almost wasted appearance. The leaves and grasses seem to thin out the further east the team flies, but unlike with most blighted, dying plants, there's no sign of wilt or decay.

Instead, the plants slowly transition to a grayish-white appearance, as if they'd been burned to ash. Eventually, as the rangers close to within about 100 miles of the compound's former location, the trees lose all their leaves and begin to look like

thin, skeletal fingers pushing up through the marsh below. The landscape below becomes a monotonous expanse of chalky, whitish patches of land poking up through dingy gray water.

## TURBULENCE

By the time the hopper passes Moorland, the electromagnetic interference blanketing the area begins to make its presence known in the aircraft's avionics. Initially, the pilot notices the hopper exhibits occasional, erratic behavior, but nothing dangerous. The passengers might disagree, though, as they must make a Vigor roll or suffer a bout of airsickness and a Fatigue level from the nauseating dips and jolts. The Fatigue recovers after an hour on solid ground.

Once they reach the blighted area beginning about 200 miles from the former compound, the interference becomes so severe that the pilot must make a Piloting roll every ten minutes (three rolls). On a failure, the hopper suffers a wound due to the damage to its navigation and control systems. The good news is the aircraft cannot take more than three wounds this way. Redundant systems and hardened electronics keep it airborne until they're within five miles of the compound, but the players don't need to know that!





## FIRST LOOK

Five miles out from the compound, the team gets a glimpse of ground zero. There are no trees or other vegetation this close to the probe; the nanites have stripped them completely away. The compound no longer exists. Instead, a group of asymmetrical spires rises hundreds of feet in height, arranged in a roughly circular ring around a large dome at the center. Some of the spires appear to be venting steam or another vapor while other, more massive ones have no readily apparent purpose.

Regardless of the pilot's skill or the condition of the aircraft, flight is not possible this close to the now fully operational probe. The electromagnetic activity overpowers even the backup systems and forces the hopper to the ground. The pilot must make a Piloting roll, modified by any wounds the aircraft may have suffered, or be forced to make a crash landing. This inflicts 3d6 damage to the hopper and passengers. Once on the ground, heroes equipped with the filtration masks are able to breathe normally. Anyone not wearing them must make a Vigor roll every ten minutes or suffer a level of Fatigue, as the adventurer struggles to draw breath in the methane-polluted atmosphere. Methane isn't lethal itself, it only displaces oxygen, and there is still enough oxygen in the air that a character cannot be Incapacitated by this Fatigue. This Fatigue is recovered at a rate of one level per 10 minutes breathing untainted air.

The methane does make explosions and fire-based attacks considerably more effective (effectively doubling the damage dice).

## INTRUDER ALERT

The rangers and their allies have to cross five miles of open ground before reaching the probe. While the majority of drones have been directed out to the edges of the wasteland area, the probe has kept a few on hand for both protection and physical labor. Additionally, the entire area is literally crawling with nanite swarms, which immediately alerts the probe of the team's presence. The probe begins sending drones to intercept heroes, not unlike antibodies reacting to a virus.

Crossing the distance to the compound is handled as a **Dramatic Task** (see *Savage Worlds*). The heroes must choose a lead character who may use Fighting, Shooting, or Psionics at -2. The other characters may assist using one of the

forementioned skills; it does not have to be the same as the lead character's choice. Extras assist using a group roll. Characters and Extras suffer damage based upon the final roll result for the Dramatic Task; they suffer no damage with a raise or more, 2d6 damage with a success, and 3d6 damage with a failure. Should the spacers fail to acquire five tokens in five rounds or fail on a complication, the group must start over.

Shaken characters may attempt to become Unshaken on the following turn. While Shaken they may lead or assist, but suffer an additional -2 to their rolls.

## GROUND ZERO

Upon reaching the former boundary of the Foundation facility, the team discovers no sign of its remains. Where it once stood, the nanites have erected a series of structures centering on the artifact nearly 300 yards across. The alien construction is comprised of a silicon-based material that appears whitish at a distance, but up close is almost translucent. All of the strange buildings are covered with tiny imperfections: vein-like piping and smooth, asymmetrical blisters from a few inches to several feet across.

Five large towers each more than 200 feet high surround a large, central dome-like canopy. Interspersed among the taller spires are shorter and slimmer ones, which are constantly venting vapor. Analysis reveals these smaller towers to be the source of the methane production.

A character making a successful Knowledge (Engineering), Knowledge (Astrogation), or Piloting roll at a -2, recognizes the tall spires to be orbital launch vehicles in various states of completion, although of very unusual design. A raise on the roll identifies elements of hyperspace drives on the vehicles.

The surface of the ground is covered by the strange silicate, and proves to be more difficult to walk on than trudging through the marsh. The surface is uneven and strangely slick, even though it appears to be completely dry. This is because nanites coat every exposed piece of the edifice and ground. Any character attempting to run on the treacherous glaze must make an Agility roll or fall.

## IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS...

The team doesn't need to penetrate to the center of the gth-kel edifice. In fact, they can't. The probe is effectively encased beneath dozens



of feet of the unearthly material. The substance is incredibly tough. A single cubic foot of it is Toughness 12.

Fortunately, the EMP warhead is effective to 100 yards, and the pulse is not impeded by the silicate structure. As long as they make it within that distance of the primary artifact, which lies at the center of the devastated compound, the device is effective in destroying the gth-kel probe.

That doesn't mean it's a walk in the park, though. As soon as the team reaches the edge of the bizarre structure, they become the prime focus for the probe's defenses. The rangers have to fight their way through at least 50 yards of the toughest piece of ground on Leviathan to get the EMP warheads in range.

Waves of drone anklebiters and improved drones created from the remains of the facility's staff charge the heroes. While the gth-kel probe isn't aware of the EMP warheads, it knows the team hasn't come bearing goodwill gifts. There are also more than a few former JumpSec officers in the mix, having been converted in the past couple of days after being sent to evacuate the (already dead) Schlacter personnel.

Every round, four anklebiters and two improved drones arrive on scene to engage the team. They primarily meet the characters head-on, but feel free to have some flank from the sides if you want. The anklebiters run to close the distance, using Wild Attacks and gang-up bonuses as much as possible.

The anklebiters go after rangers not protected by a static field generator first. If the entire team is within static fields, they charge straight at the fields. The field kills the creature, but their corpse piles count as difficult terrain to cross, slowing the heroes down for the improved drones.

The improved drones use their lasers and maintain distance. The improved drones target any active static field generators (-2 penalty) first to open up the team to the anklebiters. If no static field generators are present, roll a d6 for each at the beginning of every round. On a 1, the drone targets the personal repeller (-4 penalty) of the character closest to it.

Although they aren't visible, the entire area is flooded with nanites—and they are actually the greatest threat to the heroes if the improved drones succeed in taking out the team's protection. There are unlimited nanite swarms available to spawn at a microsecond's notice.

Any hero or ally unprotected by a static field or personal repeller is immediately targeted by one which appears within 1d6" of the character on the next round.

- **Drone Anklebiters (4 per round):** Use the stats for Anklebiter (page 81) modified by the Drone template (page 44).
- **Improved Drones (2 per round):** See page 51.
- **Nanite Swarm:** See page 60.

## BEGINNING OF THE END

If the team detonates one of the two warheads within range of the artifact, there are several immediate effects. Anyone within a Medium Burst Template suffers 4d6 damage from the incidental explosion, thanks to the methane atmosphere, but that's probably the least of the heroes' concern.

All electronic devices in their possession fail catastrophically. This may be more than a little unsettling, since that includes personal repellers and static field generators. It also includes many weapons, from lasers to laceraun prods. Only simple melee weapons and slugthrowers are likely to be unaffected.

The rangers' shock of being rendered defenseless in the middle of a lethal environment passes quickly as the nanites and drones drop lifelessly around them. A second or two after the initial blast, a powerful, electric wave pulses outward from the center of the gth-kel structure. This is the dying surge of energy released by the artifact being transmitted from nanite to nanite.

The burst passes over the team harmlessly as all the nanites within 100 yards of them are already burned out by the initial EMP blast. It takes only minutes for the pulse to pass through all the nanites and drones on Leviathan. As it does, every single one is burned out and rendered inert. (Any robotic characters on the team who are shut down prior to the EMP's detonation are fine, but require someone to activate them afterwards.)

The strange structure begins collapsing slowly around the rangers. Without the nanites providing cohesion, much of the towers and other construction begin to disintegrate, imploding into piles of powdery, faintly glittering dust. The collapse of the edifice, although massive, poses no threat to the team beyond their laundry bill.



## NANITE SWARM

Near the gth-kel artifact, the nanite infestation is so dense they form into actual swarms. There are so many of the tiny robots in these swarms they're actually visible in the air, resembling a light gray smoke that moves swiftly and independent of any air currents.

Nanite swarms typically cover an area equal to a Large Burst Template, when they coalesce to attack. In this form, they are able to attack everyone and everything within their boundaries each round. The swarm is dispersed if it suffers a wound.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d4, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Notice d8, Stealth d12, Tracking d10

**Pace:** —; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7

### Special Abilities:

**Devour:** A nanite swarm attacks the very molecular structure of its victims, breaking them down to their component atoms over time. This attack hits automatically, causing 2d6 damage to everyone within the swarm's template. Only a personal repeller, force field, or completely sealed suit of armor provides protection against this damage. Regular armor only protects for a number of rounds equal to its Armor value, before the nanites eat through it, rendering it useless; force fields and personal repellers protect for as long as they are functioning.

**Flight:** Nanite swarms fly at a rate of 10" with a Climb of 3.

**Infection:** Regardless of the amount of damage a swarm inflicts, a victim must make a Vigor roll at a -2 penalty each round he is in direct contact with a nanite swarm or be infected. Only force fields, personal repellers, and completely airtight armor protects from direct contact with a swarm, and then only for a limited time. After a number of rounds equal to the Armor value, the nanites eat through the protection and begin trying to infect the wearer. Force fields and personal repellers protect as long as they remain powered up.

**Matter Conversion:** A nanite swarm does its damage to all inanimate objects within its template as well. Even if it isn't destroyed by the damage, each round of exposure to the swarm also reduces the object's Toughness by 1. This damage cannot be repaired, as it represents destruction at the molecular level spread throughout the entire object.

**Split:** A nanite swarm can spawn smaller swarms to pursue foes that separate. The swarm can break off into two Medium Burst Templates, one Medium and two Small Burst Templates, or even four Small Burst Templates as best suits the situation. Medium swarms have Toughness 7, and Small swarms have Toughness 5. The damage caused remains the same, regardless of size.

**Swarm:** Parry +2; Due to the sub-microscopic size of the nanites, normal weapons do no real damage to the swarm. Area-effect weapons work normally. Unlike most swarms, stomping a swarm has no effect, nor does jumping in water deter it in anyway.

**Weakness (Electricity):** Any nanite swarm that comes in contact with a powerful electrical field, such as a static repeller field (but not a personal repeller) or laceraun prod, must make a Vigor roll at a -4 penalty or immediately die as the nanites short out. On a success, the swarm is Shaken, and on a raise, it may act normally. Electrically based attacks do an additional 2d6 damage to the swarm.



## TURNING BACK THE APOCALYPSE

If the team succeeded in deactivating the gth-kel probe, they have every right to celebrate. They almost single-handedly averted not only the destruction of Leviathan, but also the creation of more planetscaping probes that would have soon been launched targeting other planets. As those would then spawn further probes, it is possible they saved much of the Known Worlds from being turned into unlivable hellholes suitable only for colonization by a species that ceased to exist before man's ancestors ever walked upright.

Of course, in the immediate aftermath, they're stuck in the middle of a dead wasteland, hundreds of miles from civilization. If they took no measures to protect their hopper from the nanite swarms, the aircraft has been reduced to little more than a few pieces of its frame. Even if they did, the dying pulse from the gth-kel artifact shorted out what little electronic equipment was still functioning at the time of the crash landing. Just making it flightworthy requires 6 hours and a Repair roll at a -4 penalty. Each raise on that roll halves the time needed. However, the hopper is likely still at 3 wound levels (or more), thanks to the previous damage caused to its avionics during the flight in.

Similarly, the rest of the team's electronic equipment is inoperable, including any means of communications with JumpSec or the rest of the planet. Repairing a piece of it requires a Repair roll at a -2 penalty and one hour of labor. Once contacted, JumpSec sends a rescue hopper that arrives within two hours. If they don't succeed in reestablishing comms, a rescue and survey team reaches the former compound after about 24 hours.

## LOOSE ENDS

The rangers are afforded a hero's welcome in Ralston. As the details of the mission come out, the spacers become local celebrities of a sort. As long as they are on Leviathan, they enjoy +2 Charisma to any permanent residents and off-worlders present at the time they basically saved the world. After a few weeks, most of the visitors present have cycled out, and the heroes become just another face in the crowd to the next round of tourists, though.

JumpCorp, sensing a chance for some positive press, provides each of them with a bonus equal to a year's salary in a very public ceremony.

The company graciously offers to extend their contracts, possibly even offering the rangers much-deserved promotions. The massive corporation also has branches on virtually every inhabited planet in the Known Worlds, so this is also a perfect opportunity for you to transition your campaign to another setting if you'd like!

Finally, a horde of scientists from nearly every imaginable field of study descends on Leviathan over the next several months to get a look at the alien device. Very little is learned from it, as the EMP did considerable damage to its internals. Most of the constructs erected by the nanites broke down in the aftermath, leaving the researchers studying little more than silicon dust.

All the best and brightest are able to glean is that the artifact was indeed a planetscaping device that used nanorobots to transform planetary environments, presumably into one more suitable to the species that created the probe. They're able to determine its age at somewhere between two and three million years. From the rangers' after-action reports, most also agree with the theory that the probe was creating duplicates to launch at other planets. However, beyond that, all they can determine is that there is no previous record of any similar device—or the race responsible—in known history.









# CHAPTER SIX: SAVAGE TALES

In this chapter you'll find a number of Savage Tales, mini-adventures ready to run as-is or use as the foundation for your own larger scenarios.

Each tale has a Hook at the beginning. This tells you the region of Leviathan where the adventure best fits. With a little modification, you can place most of them wherever suits your purposes.

Finally, although most of these Savage Tales assume the heroes are rangers in the employ of JumpSec, it doesn't take much work to adjust any of them to accommodate a party of freelancers or private explorers.

## SPECTATOR SPORT

**Hook:** Great Eastern Plain or Altian Highlands

The heroes come across a large encampment, staging laceraun fights. Before they can fully work out the legalities of the activity, a jittery wrangler triggers a potential disaster.

## LIGHTS IN THE WILDERNESS

One night during a flight back from a mission or perhaps just on a routine patrol, have the rangers roll Notice rolls. The adventurer who has the highest roll spots a cluster of spotlights on the ground. The team is nowhere near any known settlement, and the amount of lights is far greater than a simple camp would deploy.

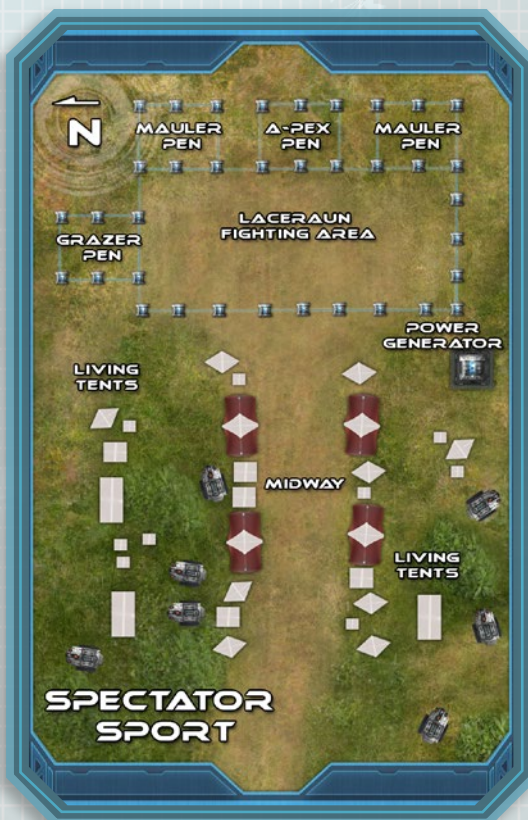
Investigating, the spacers see the spotlights mark the location of a small tent city. Several hoppers and crawlers are parked around the edges of the encampment, but their attention is quickly drawn to the far side of the tents. A static repeller fence rings an area almost 50 yards across. More static fields have been erected bordering the ring, and the characters can see several lacerauns pacing nervously inside the fields. One even holds an a-pek!

Landing is no problem. There is ample open ground surrounding the encampment. In fact, if the team hovers for more than a minute or two, a guide equipped with glowing light tubes directs them to a convenient landing spot.

The ground guide meets them at the door. As soon as he gets a better look at their uniforms and aircraft, the man stutters, then says, "I'm sorry, officers. I'll get Boraz." The guide hustles off into the small encampment.

If the heroes aren't JumpSec personnel, not in uniform, or don't identify themselves as such, the man requests a C\$1,000 per person admission fee. Should they refuse, a group of tough-looking individuals emerge from the surrounding darkness to encourage them to be on their way.

- **Toughs (1 per hero):** Use the stats for Thug from the *Science Fiction Companion*. Armed with stun clubs (Str+d4, Vigor roll to avoid Incapacitation, see the *Science Fiction Companion*).





## BOOMTOWN

The encampment itself hosts not only tents for living quarters, but also a number of vendors. A large aisle leads through the center of the camp where the merchant stalls are set up. The dealers hawk everything from food to ammunition to trophies taken from lacerauns, no doubt of questionable legality. There is a distinct carnival-like atmosphere in the air.

If the team isn't at the encampment on official business, they're free to watch the fights—at least until the fun begins. Handle any side bets as described in the Gambling skill in *Savage Worlds*.

If the team is in uniform, all of the visitors wandering through the camp try to steer wide of them and avoid eye contact. Cornering and questioning any of them reveals the majority to be on site to watch fights between various lacerauns. Many also admit to participating in side betting on the outcomes.

Before they make it too far into the encampment, they're approached by a deader in the company of the ground guide they met earlier. He introduces himself as Boraz and politely explains he's in charge of the camp. The deader asks how he may be of assistance.

If the rangers confront him about the fights or betting, he assures them his operation is completely legal. He produces several hunting permits verifying each laceraun on premises was taken legally. The deader proves quite well versed—or at least a good fast-talker—on Vestal's regulations in a number of areas.

*"As none of these creatures is being transported off-planet, my clients are allowed discretion as to the methods by which they choose to execute their permit. As to any gambling, I do not run any such activities, but neither do I discourage it as long as it remains between individuals and is not organized. As you know Vestal's regulations apply only to organized gambling concerns."*

The heroes can argue or discuss the finer points of the legality of his enterprise with Boraz. Treat this as a Social Conflict (see *Savage Worlds*) using the lower of Knowledge (Law) or Persuasion. The Boraz has Knowledge (Law) and Persuasion at d8. If the team isn't at the encampment on official business, they're free to watch the fights—at least until the fun begins. Handle any side bets as described in the Gambling skill in *Savage Worlds*.

Regardless of the outcome of the rangers' debate with Boraz, their very presence has spooked some

of the other visitors. One, in his haste to avoid any entanglement with the law (real or imagined), drives his crawler over the power cables running from the camp's power supply to the static field generators. If the spacers are here as civilians, an attendee who lost too much money and found too much alcohol is responsible.

The spotlights go out, plunging the camp into darkness—and sending up yells of frustration from vendors and spectators alike. Those angry shouts are quickly silenced by the roars of several freed lacerauns. In mere seconds, the festival atmosphere turns into one of terror as the visitors and staff begin to flee.

## RUN AWAY!

The first obstacle the team has to face is the panicked crowd as it rushes through the encampment toward the vehicles on the other side. Treat this as a stampede, as described in the **Stampede** sidebar on page 85, but the damage is only 1d6+1, or 2d6+2 if the adventurer gets a 1 on her Agility die. Humanoids—even badly frightened ones—just aren't as deadly as half-ton lacerauns.

The crowd is relatively small, so the danger from it lasts only two rounds. Unfortunately, right behind it is another stampede, and this one is a herd of grazers corralled by Boraz and his staff to feed the carnivorous lacerauns used in the fights. The herd is small, only a couple of dozen in number, so the stampede only lasts a single round. Any ranger failing his Agility roll suffers full damage as described in the aforementioned sidebar.

Right behind the fleeing grazers comes the reason for their terror...

## CARNIVAL OF CARNAGE

A pack of maulers pours into the encampment right behind the grazers. While Boraz kept the maulers fed enough to survive, he made sure they stayed hungry enough to be motivated in the ring. The predators aren't so fixated on the herbivores they overlook the heroes who are probably still dusting themselves off from the wave of people and lacerauns that nearly trampled them. No more than two maulers at a time square off against a given character; there are still a few grazers mingling about to keep the attention off any extras.

Two rounds after the maulers enter the camp, the a-pex thunders in. The giant carnivore



isn't picky about what or who is on the menu, attacking the nearest creature or character each round. It prefers to go after groups, but doesn't hesitate to grab a quick bite on the way to the next clump of targets.

The team isn't completely alone in the camp, though. A few of Boraz's staff as well as some of the more levelheaded members of the crowd also rode out the panicked rush. These experienced hunters function as Allies for the rangers in the fight.

The maulers fight until half their number are Incapacitated before fleeing into the dark. The a-pex remains until it has been Shaken twice or has killed at least five victims, at which point its hunger is sated. In either case, it roars once before retreating into the wilderness.

Boraz himself takes advantage of the confusion to make his own escape. He knows he was on shaky ground to begin with, and reckless endangerment won't help his cause. Leviathan is a big place, and he's not convinced he's completely tapped out the market potential yet, so he doesn't head off-planet just yet. If the team puts its resources into the task—and makes a few Streetwise rolls—they can locate the site of his next business venture in a few weeks.

- **Maulers (6, plus 1 per hero):** See page 86.
- **A-Pex (1):** See page 80.
- **Hunters (5):** See page 92.

## MISTAKEN IDENTITY

**Hook:** Altia

*Although the hook for this Savage Tale is set in Altia, it can easily be relocated to virtually any landmass on Leviathan with very little alteration.*

The rangers are sent to a tiny outpost to look into recent complaints about a pack of lacerauns that are behaving in an unusual manner. If the group has completed the **Exposure** Plot Point, JumpSec has taken a special interest in this incident due to concerns this could be another outbreak.

Pickard Station is a tiny cluster of buildings hundreds of miles from nowhere. The only reason for its existence is monitoring a geothermal pumping station on the edge of the Altian plains. The station was erected early in the process of settling the planet, but was only recently brought online to provide additional power to the distant tourist destination of Precipice. The small group of technicians sent to activate and monitor

the station has reported unusually aggressive lacerauns in the area.

## ADOPTED TROUBLE

When the station was initially under construction, the lead engineers were a husband and wife, who had brought their 6-year-old son, Mars, with them to Leviathan. After completing their assignment, the family loaded onto the last hopper out to return to Ralston. A malfunction caused the aircraft to crash not far from the station. Everyone except Mars was killed in the crash.

Unknown to his parents, the young boy was a powerful latent psionic. Animals were particularly susceptible to his influence, and his mental cries for help brought a rescuer to pull him from the wreckage—a female a-pex. By the time the rescue teams arrived from Ralston, other scavengers had been at the remains of the other crewmembers, and Mars was officially listed as dead.

Over the years, he has bonded even more closely with his a-pex protector, but also holds considerable sway over many of the other lacerauns in the area. When the Vestal technicians arrived to reactivate the power station, he saw them as a threat. Mars, now a teenager, began using his scaly friends to scout out the assumed enemy, then moved to a more offensive campaign to force the invaders to leave.

## MARAUDING MAULERS

The tiny camp of Pickard Station consists of a handful of temporary, prefabricated structures arranged to one side of the geothermal station. Three of the four polymer shelters are bunkhouses 10 feet by 20 feet in length, while the fourth is a combination mess hall and rec room of exactly the same size. The geothermal station itself is mainly pipes and valves, with a tiny concrete monitoring station to one side.

There is no permanent static repeller fence at the encampment, because there is no power source sufficient to keep it running, leaving the collection of plastic-walled huts even more vulnerable to laceraun attacks.

The technicians provide what information they can if questioned by the rangers. They noticed lacerauns in the distance almost from the day they arrived. While there were different species involved at different times, the animals all





seemed to be watching them. Over the weeks, the creatures gradually moved closer.

Within the last few days, they've found maunder tracks throughout the camp each morning. They've found supplies raided, and even the huts damaged, as if the creatures are trying to get inside. No one has been attacked, but the lacerauns are clearly becoming braver and escalating their actions.

### GATHERING INTEL

If the team takes a little time to poke around before heading off into the wild, they can find a few key pieces of information. A Tracking roll around the camp confirms that maunders have been entering the camp. If a ranger follows the tracks out of the camp, he can make a second Tracking roll a mile from Pickard. If he's successful, he makes a surprising discovery—a bare human footprint near the maunder tracks.

All of the structures in the camp were erected within the last month, with the exception of the monitoring station. Even a cursory examination of the temporary huts confirms the maunders could probably have easily torn their way inside had they been intent on doing so. Even the food storage inside the mess hall didn't draw their attention. Only supplies left outside were taken.

If a ranger looks around the older geothermal station, she can make a Notice roll. With a success, she finds a small plaque memorializing the crash that tragically claimed the life of the Pickard family. The station was posthumously named in honor of them. With a raise, she finds a small family photograph taken in front of the station that had slid down behind one of the monitor panels dated over ten years ago.

If asked, one of the technicians can tell the basics of the Pickard family story (minus the part about Mars' psionic ability and survival). It's something of a legend in the company, and also the source of more than a little superstition about the station. The tech can even give a rough heading to the location of the hopper's crash site.

### LYING IN WAIT

If the team waits for the next maunder incursion, it happens in two days. Watching the lacerauns before attacking, they note the creatures, while certainly acting oddly, don't seem particularly focused on getting to any of the humans. A Notice roll lets a character realize the animals actually seem to be almost studying the buildings



and their layout—very strange behavior for lacerauns, indeed.

Even if confronted, the maulers don't attack. Only if they are attacked themselves do they fight back, and then only long enough to escape.

The rangers can follow the lacerauns when they leave the site. However, if the heroes engaged the maulers in combat or are seen by the beasts, the lacerauns try to lose their pursuers. Handle as a Short Chase from *Savage Worlds*. If the heroes stay on their trail—or manage to track them later—the maulers lead them to the wreckage of the Pickard's hopper.

- **Maulers (2 per hero):** See page 86.

## THE BEAST MASTER

Whether they track the maulers back or follow directions from the tech in Pickard Station, the rangers should eventually reach the crashed hopper. It lies about five miles north of the geothermal plant at the edge of shallow draw perhaps 20 feet deep. A small copse of trees has grown up around the crash site over the years.

The hopper has suffered badly at the hands of the elements over the years, with rust covering most of its metallic surfaces. A Notice or Tracking roll also spots a considerable amount of laceraun feces in the area. A raise on the Tracking roll (but not Notice) identifies some of the larger piles as belonging to a larger predator than a mauler.

Before the group can enter the wreckage, a teenager drops from the trees on top of the aircraft. He holds a crude spear in one hand and yells at them in a guttural grunt. From around the edges of the small grove, the mauler pack appears, surrounding the heroes. If things weren't already dicey, an A-pex rises out of the ravine with a roar.

## A LACERAUN STAND-OFF

The boy postures and grunts at the team. A successful Smarts roll tells the group the boy is challenging or warning them to leave his territory. Unless the group threatens Mars or attacks the lacerauns, the animals do not immediately attack. If the heroes do go on the offensive, the creatures and Mars fight to the death.

The spacers may try to diffuse the situation. The team has three rounds to calm Mars down before he feels so threatened that he and the lacerauns attack. The boy long ago forgot any language skills he once had, and now communicates with laceraun-like grunts and hisses. That means directly communicating with him is out, unless

the group has access to the Power *speak language* or some other way with which to communicate with the feral teenager.

Tone of voice and body language can go a long way toward calming him. A hero who makes a successful Persuasion roll at a -2 penalty calms him down—and consequently, his lacerauns—enough to let the group remain at the crash site. Offering the boy food grants a +2 bonus on the Persuasion roll. If one of the characters discovered the family photograph in the pumping station and has the foresight to show it to Mars, allow the rangers another Persuasion roll, but this time at a +4 bonus.

It takes a total of three successes and/or raises to calm him down. The lacerauns retreat from the immediate area, but remain close enough to come running in a round if trouble breaks out. The rangers can remain as long as they want at that point, possibly cementing his trust further with additional gifts or Persuasion rolls.

- ✦ **Devil A-Pex (1):** Use the stats for A-pex on page 80.

- **Maulers (2 per hero):** See page 86.

## ✦ MARS PICKARD

Mars is wildly unkempt and wears laceraun hides. His *summon ally* calls a mauler from nearby, and counts as a Seasoned activation of the power. Mars' Beast Master Edge and *beast friend* power do not work on drone versions of any creature.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Psionics d8, Stealth d6, Survival d8, Throwing d6, Tracking d6

**Cha:** -2; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

**Hindrances:** Illiterate, Outsider (feral child), Delusion (believes he is a laceraun)

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Psionics), Beast Bond, Beast Master (A-Pex), Fleet Footed, Power Points

**Gear:** Spear (Range 3/6/12, Damage Str+d6), leather armor (+1).

**Psionic Powers:** (15 Power Points) *Beast friend*, *summon ally*.

## RESOLUTION

While they likely can't communicate with him directly, the rangers can report the situation to JumpSec. Once the source of the laceraun behavior is identified, Vestal agrees to pull the techs back until Mars can be safely brought home. It does set back their plans for integrating



the station into Precipice's power grid, but the human interest and positive Public Relations the event generates far outweighs the downside.

It coordinates with Vestal to deploy a properly equipped and trained first-contact team to establish communications with Mars. Reintegrating the boy into civilization is a long process, but hopefully the heroes laid a good foundation with their first encounter.

## STRANDED

**Hook:** Amymonian Delta

While passing through (or over) the Amymonian Delta, the heroes spot the wreckage of an airboat on the shore of a forested island. A giant krok lurks out of sight in the nearby marsh and has learned to use the wreck to lure a new type of prey to its hunting grounds.

## GRAVEYARD OF BOATS

From a distance, the airboat appears to have been recently grounded. However, the explorers can't see any signs of survivors without actually landing on the island. No one responds to any attempts to communicate or draw attention,

but the group can't rule out the possibility of survivors without going ashore.

Once on the island, the would-be rescuers can examine the wreck. It looks to have been aground on the island for a week or two at the most. The boat's fan has suffered considerable damage from a powerful impact with a large, tree-trunk-sized object. There is no sign of survivors. A Notice roll spots a good quantity of dried blood inside the passenger compartment of the airboat.

Checking around the airboat, adventurers can roll Tracking or Notice at -2. Those who succeed find the signs of a large object or two having been pulled into the tree line from the shore. Following the drag marks, the characters discover two more airboats piled haphazardly in the jungle.

Any spacer examining either boat may make a Notice roll. With a success, the hero not only realizes these boats were wrecked weeks or months ago, but also spots considerable damage to their hulls. A raise identifies some of the damage as very large bite marks. A successful Tracking roll in the same area identifies the tracks of a giant krok, and a raise tells the woodsman that the krok dragged the boats into the jungle.

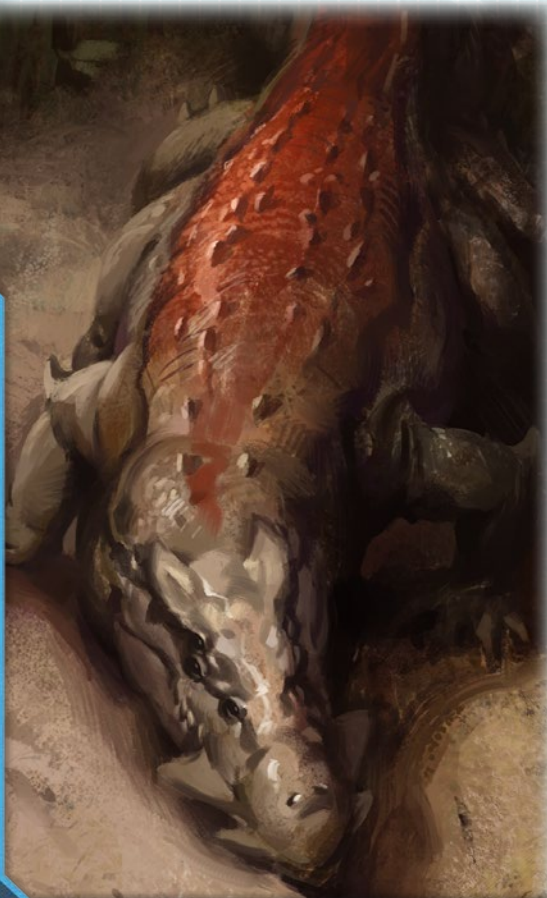
## BAIT AND SWITCH

After the heroes have had a moment to look at the wreckage hidden in the jungle, the giant krok attacks. The creature first attacks the spacers' own vehicle. The monster has learned its prey can't escape if it destroys the "hard shell" they live in first. The krok attacks the party's vehicle until either it causes at least one Wound, or the characters manage to Shake the creature with an attack. At this point, it turns on the group.

The giant krok fights until it is killed. Otherwise, it continues to attack until the heroes flee or it manages to Incapacitate at least one of them. Once the krok Incapacitates a victim, it tries to drag the victim off into the marsh to eat in peace.

A thorough search of the immediate area finds two survival kits and a big game rifle (4 rounds remaining). The wrecked boats are each too damaged to repair individually, but 1d6 days of work and a successful Repair roll (-2) can cobble together a working one from the parts of the remains. If the group doesn't have access to a fairly extensive vehicular tool kit, there is an additional -2 penalty to the Repair roll.

- **Krok, Giant:** See page 86.





## MISSION OF MERCY

**Hook:** Ralston

The team is sent out after a downed supply hopper. The aircraft turns out to be carrying something more than the routine shipment its manifest indicates.

### HOPPER DOWN

Vestal Operations deploys the heroes on what appears to be a standard search-and-rescue operation to recover a Bio-Frontiers hopper that crashed near an island in the Sea of Fire. There is a slight change from routine, though. A Bio-Frontiers representative, Carex a floran, is to accompany the team on the flight. There is a shipment of material the corporation considers proprietary, and the rep is there to assume custody of the shipment.

Carex won't reveal the details of what they are to recover, only that their employers consider it confidential in nature. If pressed, he reassures the heroes the material is inert, non-living, and safe for transport. Anything further, he says, violates non-disclosure agreements Bio-Frontiers requires all employees to sign.

### DIRTY JOB

Carex isn't a Bio-Frontiers employee. Actually, he's part of a chain that smuggles unregistered, and highly illegal, drugs off-planet. A partner in crime at the Bio-Frontiers manufactures the pharmaceuticals using a combination of spitter venom and siren plant extracts. That's also where the floran obtained his corporate ID—it is fake, but short of actually comparing it to company rolls, also impossible to detect as a forgery.

He then slips them aboard a regularly scheduled flight back to Ralston. Carex takes custody of it and passes it to a spacer named Weiss who then ferries it to a drop point on one of Typhon's moons. A group of interstellar smugglers pick up the shipment from there and transports it out of the system.

Due to unexpected complications, Carex's connection at Bio-Frontiers fell behind in production. The downed flight was carrying the equivalent of three regular shipments, or nearly a month's production. As is often the case in these ventures, those further up the chain aren't particularly understanding about delays, and both Carex and his contact have their necks on the chopping block if the drugs aren't recovered.

To ensure the drugs get to the right people, the contact forged the necessary approval to get Carex aboard the heroes' flight.

### UNSCHEDULED LAYOVER

The Bio-Frontiers hopper didn't just crash. It was shot down by a Natural Order cell, which recently set up camp on an island in the Sea of Fire. The terrorists intend to disrupt travel in the area, and the corporate hopper was the first vehicle to come within range. The pilot crash-landed on the same island.

Finding the crashed aircraft isn't difficult. The pilot engaged the emergency beacon as the hopper went down, and the heroes' own hopper's can easily home in on it with its onboard computer. The crash site is located on a supposedly unoccupied island in the Sea of Fire about 30 miles north of the shores of Altia.

## BAD DREAM

The drug Carex is smuggling is a new creation called Dream, developed from the toxins found in a couple of the planet's life forms. The main ingredients are siren creeper spores and spitter venom. Dream induces a strong sedative effect, while immersing the user in a pleasant hallucinatory state. It is also powerfully addictive, hooking some users on the first dose.

Dream is administered by hypodermic or simply ingested. Any spacer foolish enough to try a dose must make an immediate Vigor roll at -2. With a success, the user is Exhausted for 1d6 hours and visited by occasional hallucinations causing an additional -2 penalty on all Smarts-based Trait rolls during that time. Failure means the character slips into an almost comatose state while experiencing powerful, but soothing hallucinations for the same period.

Anyone taking even a single dose must immediately make a Spirit roll, modified by a -1 penalty for every previous dose of Dream they've taken in their lifetime. Failure indicates the character has acquired the Hindrance Habit (Major) for the drug.



## SOMETHING'S AMISS

The Bio-Frontiers vehicle came to rest in a stretch of jungle not far from a relatively open stretch of beach on which the adventurers can land. Right away, it becomes obvious something's wrong at the crash site. The hopper shows obvious signs of being hit by a missile. Worse, an investigation of the vehicle finds the pilot dead in his seat—from a laser wound! A Tracking roll finds several human footprints around the hopper, leading to and from the surrounding jungle.

Carex is reduced to near panic by the scene, muttering something to himself about a “double-cross,” but denies it if asked. He immediately climbs into the hopper's cargo bay (which has been pretty thoroughly picked over by the terrorists). He moves aside the debris, opens a concealed maintenance hatch, and sighs with obvious relief when he finds several metal suitcases still hidden inside.

The smuggler turns to the heroes and says, *“There's nothing further we can do here. We should get back to Ralston, so I can file the necessary reports on this. Quick, help me get these back to the hopper.”* He claims to know nothing about the obvious weapon damage on the hopper, weakly dismissing any concerns the characters may have. He even balks at taking the time to recover the murdered pilot's body.

## AMBUSH!

The Natural Order guerrillas observed the arrival of the adventurers' hopper, but weren't able to get their surface-to-air launcher ready in time to take a shot. They do, however, have a very good idea where the heroes are headed and make haste to intercept them. They arrive only minutes behind the rescue team.

They attempt to ambush the characters. Allow the group to make Notice rolls to avoid surprise attack as normal (see **Surprise** in *Savage Worlds*).

Carex immediately assumes it's the smugglers he's been dealing with trying to cut him out of the loop. He screams, *“They're trying to kill me!”* and ducks for cover. He does shoot back, but won't endanger himself for the other characters.

The terrorists fight until more than half their number are Incapacitated. The rest flee into the jungle. They have no way off the island, so if the party pursues, they turn and fight to the death.

★ **Terrorist Cell Leader:** See page 94.

• **Terrorists (2, plus 1 per hero):** See page 94.

## ★ CAREX

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Driving d4, Fighting d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Piloting d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9 (4) Hindrances: Big Mouth, Greedy, Yellow

**Edges:** Connections (criminal), Connections (Bio-Frontiers)

**Gear:** Laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2), concealed body armor (+4).

**Special Abilities:**

- **Dependency (Sunlight):** Carex acquires a Fatigue level if he can't bask in sunlight at least once a day. This can cause death.
- **Hardy:** A second Shaken result doesn't cause a wound.
- **High Tech Hindrance:** Standard tech is confusing to florans. Carex suffers a -2 penalty when using typical electronic systems.
- **No Vital Organs:** Called shots do no extra damage.
- **Regeneration:** Roll natural healing once a day if not Exhausted from lack of sunlight.
- **Weakness (Heat/Fire):** +4 damage from heat or fire attacks; -4 to resist other effects.

## COMING CLEAN

A Tracking roll leads the explorers back to the terrorist camp. There are the usual tents and survival gear, along with two dozen energy packs, a sophisticated radar system for detecting nearby aircraft, and a portable surface-to-air missile launcher (Range 50/100/200, Damage 6d6, RoF1, AP 20, HW, SBT). There is a crate holding six more missiles (two are missing), each weighing 3 lb. The launcher weighs 15 lb.

Carex confesses to the entire smuggling scheme if the heroes confront him and make a successful Intimidation roll. They can get the same result with Persuasion at a -2 penalty. Carex is a coward. If the party doesn't turn him in, he can serve as a valuable contact in Leviathan's admittedly limited criminal underworld. The black market in Ralston is small, but the smuggler may be able to help them obtain a weapon or piece of gear not available through JumpSec's normal channels.

JumpSec is very interested in the expansion of Natural Order activities, especially the group's acquisition of heavy weapons. If the group uncovered the smuggling plot, their superiors notify Bio-Frontiers immediately, cutting off the supply.



## A MOST DANGEROUS GAME

**Hook:** Ralston or Burroughs

The party is hired to serve as guides—or at least transportation and support—to a group of extremely wealthy hunters. Once in the wilderness, the hunters reveal the heroes are actually the prey for this particular expedition.

### IMPOSSIBLE TO REFUSE

While enjoying a period of downtime, one or more of the group is approached by a trio of obviously wealthy tourists. They introduce themselves as Wynn Jerrick, Mal Ilyander, and Tomas Slank. The men explain they've come to the planet in the hopes of bagging an a-pex, but upon arrival found the guide company they'd hired, Barton Expeditions, had gone out of business and disappeared—which is true and can be confirmed with a successful Streetwise roll.

Jerrick and his friends explain they're looking to hire someone for a short excursion, but all of the hunting guides are booked for the near future. Their return tickets are for a voyage leaving the system in less than a week and they're desperate to get a hunt in. Since the rangers are presumably not only familiar with the planet, but professionally trained by JumpSec in the necessary skills to survive there, the hunters were hoping the team members might be able to help.

The men explain they're all very experienced hunters and really need help on the logistics side. They're certain they're up to the task of the hunt, provided they can actually get to an appropriate hunting ground. The nearest habitat for an a-pex is the Great Northern Plain, and they're willing to pay top dollar for local guides or pilots to help get them there.

For reimbursement, they start at C\$1,000 a day. Each success and raise on a Persuasion roll ups that amount by C\$250. While their contract with JumpSec doesn't specifically preclude accepting side work during their downtime, should they check the team members discover it's frowned upon by the corporation. If they point this out, Jerrick automatically ups the offer by C\$250 a day, no roll necessary.

Jerrick and company are fully outfitted and also cover food and gear for anyone who signs on. If the group doesn't have access to a hopper, their employers rent an aircraft for the trip as well.

## THE HUNT

The hunters have a location already selected on the Great Northern Plain near the edge of the Stygian Deep. Jerrick explains Barton had sent some preliminary trip info prior to collapsing. They're anxious to get started and want to leave that very day or the next morning at the latest, citing their return flight deadline.

The trip to their chosen location is uneventful. The men are nearly ecstatic, thoroughly questioning the characters on their own experiences throughout the flight. Upon reaching the campsite, they seem almost giddy, but set camp with the skill and economy of very experienced woodsmen.

After taking a brief excursion to survey the area, they return for camp. In a celebratory mood after salvaging their vacation plans, Ilyander offers to prepare the entire expedition a special meal of behemoth steaks they bought in Ralston. His companions are delighted, explaining the man is a wilderness chef second to none.

### DOUBLE-CROSSED

The meal is indeed delicious, almost unbelievable given the limited resources the cook had at hand. However, its flavor masks more than just wood smoke. Ilyander seasoned the heroes' steaks and other food with a potent sedative. A character eating the meal must make a Vigor roll at -4 or fall unconscious. Those who succeed are Exhausted, and on a raise only Fatigued.

Should any of the group resist the poison or simply refuse to eat, Jerrick and Slank produce laser pistols and attempt to force them into shackles at gunpoint. Their hand tipped, the duplicitous hunters have no choice but to play it out fully.

Assuming they take the party captive, they quickly inject their victims with a hypodermic, placing a tracer fluid in their bloodstream. This allows the men to follow their intended quarry, even if they lose the trail on the ground. The hunters are interested in a challenge, but they also know they can't risk the spacers getting away.

Once the injection is complete, they load the group onto the hopper and fly them further into the wilderness. Stripping them of anything but their clothing and personal repellers, the men remove the shackles and carry (or force) them off the hopper into the scrubland at the edge of the



plains. Before departing, they leave a paper map and a note that reads:

*"Our apologies, but even so-called dinosaurs seem blasé after all of our travels. We've decided to extend your contract to include duties as quarry for our next hunt. Make it back to the location marked on the map, and we'll double the agreed upon payment."*

*"If you are successful in reaching the original site, obviously, we won't be taking you back to Ralston with us, but we will notify the authorities of your location after we've cleared the system. We'd wish you luck, but that seems a little disingenuous, wouldn't you agree?"*

## ON THE RUN

The hunters return to the original campsite, then set out on ATVs to intercept the group. The original campsite is approximately 20 miles from the point where they dropped the explorers. The terrain varies between Average near the plains to Hard the farther into the jungle one goes for the purpose of travel (see **Travel** in *Savage Worlds*).

It's a competition for the men, at least initially, so they head in different directions, each hoping to be the first to "bag a trophy." They take advantage of the superior range of their weaponry, and in spite of any prior intent, aren't the least bit above using their tracking devices to gain an advantage.

Once one of their number falls or is captured, the other two join forces to try to overcome the heroes. If the trio is reduced to a single survivor, he attempts to make it back to the hopper and flee, leaving the characters (and possibly his companions) to their fate in the wilds.

The adventurers can approach the hunt as they see fit. Regardless of whether they head for the campsite or try to lose their pursuers by going further into the wilderness, the hunters doggedly follow. You should also throw in regular Encounter checks. And if the heroes find a way to use them to their advantage, perhaps luring one of the hunters into a grazer stampede—all the better!

If they choose to try to craft some weapons, an hour's work and a Survival roll allows a character to fashion a spear or club (Str+d4). Two hours and a Survival roll at a -2 penalty is necessary to create a crude bow and 10 arrows (Range 8/16/32, Damage 2d6-1, RoF 1). Anything else is outside the range of what they can build given the limited time and tools available.

Allow the heroes a chance to figure out they're being tracked after an encounter or two with their stalkers. A Notice roll detects evidence of the injection sites. A Knowledge (Electronics) roll or Repair roll at -2 allows a character to construct a jammer for the tracking devices using a personal repeller—but renders the original repeller useless. With a raise on the roll, the mechanic can actually rig the jammer to emit a decoy signal as well.

Finally, the explorers can set try to set a deadfall or similar trap for the hunters. A Survival roll and an hour's labor allows them to construct a relatively simple trap. With a success, the trap does 2d6 or 3d6 on a raise, regardless of the design. A Notice roll at -2 is necessary to spot the trap, but the spacers must find a way to lead their pursuer into it.

✦ **Hunters (3, see above):** See page 92, but make each a Wild Card as well. Replace the motion tracker with tracking device. Also equipped with a laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2), an ATV, camouflage suit, and commlink (see the *Science Fiction Companion*).

## ENDGAME

Ultimately, the hunters do not intend to let the heroes survive. Murder is a serious crime that carries severe penalties in nearly all systems. On top of that, they can't be sure the attempt won't come back to haunt them later, either in the form of bounty hunters or elaborate revenge plots.

If the survivors are naïve enough to waltz into the campsite, any remaining hunters are happy to take any free shots they can. Of course, if the party survives, they can lay claim to the men's extensive supplies, including three ATVs, laceraun rifles, radios, and stealth suits, as well as a variety of miscellaneous gear worth approximately C\$5,000 in resale value.



## SUPPLY RUN

**Hook:** Schlacter Foundation or Bio-Frontiers

One of the firms on Leviathan enlists the heroes to wrangle a new subject for their studies. This Savage Tale is repeatable any number of times.

### ROUND-UP

Both the Schlacter Foundation and Bio-Frontiers perform research and/or experiments requiring living specimens. While their own staff sometimes acquires the creatures, they also contract the work out to others—and usually for the really tough jobs, if we're being brutally honest. Given the nature of the inhabitants of the planet, this is no walk in the park.

Obviously, if the heroes have begun to butt heads with the Foundation, no further jobs of this nature are forthcoming from that company. Or at least none that aren't intended to turn the characters into fertilizer!

To determine what species their current employer requires, you can either roll a random result from the appropriate regional encounter table or just pick a creature from the bestiary that you think presents a good challenge. The corporation provides a tranquilizer rifle and three doses scaled to the creature's Size, as well as a method of transporting the specimen once it's bagged. This is almost always a hopper or crawler (with crew), but for really exotic requests another vehicle may be substituted.

The company generally pays a bounty equal to  $C\$1,000 \times$  the creature's Size. An adventurer can negotiate a 10% increase in that amount for every success and raise on a Persuasion roll—but only one such roll can be attempted for any given assignment.

## OUT OF SEASON

**Hook:** Moorland

A guide reported a large number of dead animals on Borea a few days ago. While there are no endangered animals on Leviathan, the Department of Wildlife (DOW) does carefully regulate permits to prevent imbalances between the species, so they're very interested in identifying unexplained deviations from their managed quotas.

### SOMETHING'S ROTTEN IN BOREA

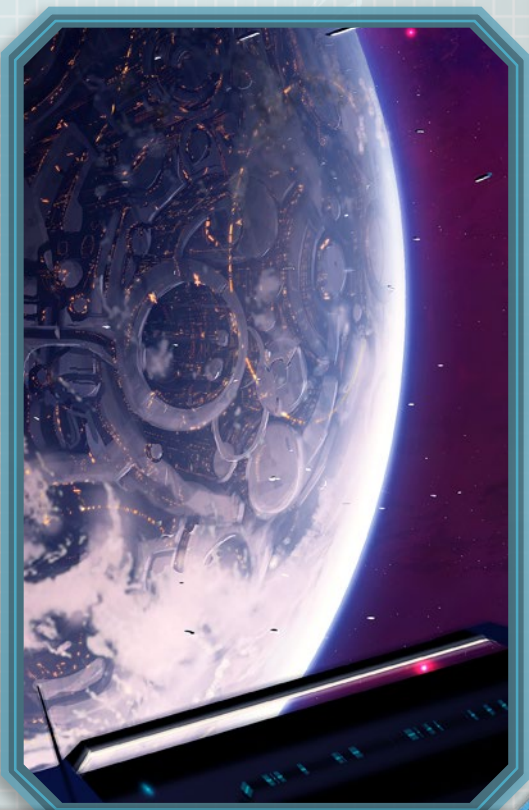
JumpSec officers in Moorland provide the party with a copy of the report filed by the guide, Jan

Falsted. Reading over the document, it's obvious there's little to be learned without visiting the actual scene. The guide only noted the dead lacerauns as the tour flew over a small meadow. Falsted did not land for closer observation, nor did she see anything else out of the ordinary. If they're interested in a direct interview, the characters can locate her with a successful Streetwise roll, but she has nothing else to add of any importance.

Falsted did make note of the exact location of the scene using her navigational equipment, so finding the location is not a challenge. True to the guide's report, the heroes do find a herd of over a dozen dead grazers scattered about the clearing. It's impossible to make out details from the air, because even though the jungle canopy doesn't cover the area, thick grasses and undergrowth conceal the details of the creatures' deaths.

Once the group sets down and begins to examine the dead animals, they discover the vegetation also hides a pack of scavenging anklebiters that don't appreciate the uninvited arrivals. The small lacerauns attack shortly after the adventurers begin moving around the clearing. They only surrender their bounty once more than half of their number has fallen.

- **Anklebiters (3 per hero):** See page 81.







## POACHED!

With the scavengers chased away, the characters can more thoroughly examine the carcasses. The scavengers have made a mess of many of the dead grazers, but a successful Notice roll spots evidence of projectile wounds on several of the bodies—and it's very possible that scavenger bites conceal similar wounds on all of them. A raise on the roll identifies it as a large caliber slugthrower bullet, possibly even one from a laceraun rifle.

Further examination discovers that all of the animals are missing several teeth, and the reproductive organs have been removed from the males. These are all coming into vogue on some planets as aphrodisiacs. A character with underworld connections may realize it on a successful Common Knowledge roll (–2).

A successful Tracking roll in the meadow finds several pairs of booted footprints around each carcass. The tracks lead back into the jungle. After a mile, the trail ends at a crawler with several armed men around it.

## PAPERS PLEASE

The poachers bristle at the group's approach. They're led by a particularly rough-looking individual saurian named Rezz't, who is chewing on a piece of raw flesh when the team members arrive. He insists they're a legitimate hunting contractor. The other men mutter in agreement, but answer any questions gruffly and with one- or two-word mumbled answers, then hustle off to another part of the camp.

Rezz't, frequently flicking his tongue as he speaks, claims his expedition was returning from a hunt a couple of days ago when they startled a herd of grazers. The lacerauns panicked and began a stampede. The "hunters" had no option but to defend themselves. If confronted about the missing body parts, the poacher feigns ignorance, suggesting the carcasses had been there for several days and perhaps scavengers had been at them.

The poacher's story doesn't add up on examination. Any hero who succeeded on a Tracking roll back in the clearing can tell the grazers where not stampeding when the slaughter began. If asked, Rezz't can't produce a license to be operating a hunting guide service, saying he must have left it back in Moorland... no Burroughs.

Finally, if the rangers insist on searching the site for evidence of poaching, Rezz't is all smiles and leads them to his crawler. Inside, there are a number of laceraun carcasses as well as countless trophy parts. Rezz't grins and shrugs when exposed, but his men try to use this exchange to catch the heroes by surprise.

Unless some of the spacers specifically were watching for a double-cross, have them roll Notice rolls to check for surprise as normal. The poachers attack until half their number of more is Incapacitated. The survivors either surrender or try to escape into the wilderness.

If you want to tie this Savage Tale into **Mission of Mercy** (page 69), Rezz't can use Carex as his contact to get his contraband off-planet.

- **Poachers (1 per hero):** Use the stats for Hunter on page 92. One is armed with a laceraun rifle (Range 50/100/200, Damage 3d10, RoF 1, AP 6, HW). The rest carry gyrojet pistols (Range 12/24/48, Damage 3d6, RoF 1, heat seeker warheads, HW).



## ★ REZZ'T

Rezz't is a dusty-brown colored saurian from a desert planet. He takes a personal trophy from every kill he makes—usually teeth. He sports a large necklace containing dozens of teeth from creatures across the galaxy, including more than one sentient race.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Driving d6, Fighting d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Shooting d8, Survival d8, Streetwise d4, Swimming d4, Tracking d8

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Greedy, Overconfident, Quirk (Hoards water)

**Edges:** Connections (criminal), Woodsman

**Gear:** Gyrojet pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 3d6, RoF 1, heat seeker warheads, HW), personal repeller, survival knife (Str+d4), spare clip.

### Special Abilities:

- **Natural Weaponry (Teeth):** Str+d6.
- **Keen Senses:** Rezz't can "taste" the air, gaining +2 to relevant Notice rolls.
- **Environmental Weakness (Cold):** -4 to resist cold environmental effects; +4 damage from cold-based attacks.

## CRYING WOLF

**Hook:** Anywhere

The heroes respond to a distress call in a remote area, only to discover they've fallen into a trap. The Natural Order, in an effort to handicap JumpSec and also garner some supplies, is laying ambushes for ranger teams.

## S.O.S.

The rangers pick up the signal of an emergency beacon not far from their flight path. This can occur at any time during a scheduled patrol, but the terrorists are most likely to target a team returning to base after completion of a mission. They are betting the rangers are likely tired and ready to get some rest, so they may be easier to take by surprise. The guerrillas also try to stage their ambushes far enough away from any settlement to guarantee reinforcements won't arrive before they have time to disappear back into the wilderness.

The beacon is coming from a stranded crawler and indicates a mechanical failure of some sort. When they arrive on site, the rangers see a

skimmer on the ground at an odd angle. Scattered around the vehicle are several motionless bodies dressed in typical tourist attire, all apparently thrown from the vehicle by whatever caused it to crash.

## MY, WHAT BIG GUNS YOU HAVE!

Once the team disembarks and moves to check the "victims," the terrorists attack. Have the team check for surprise as normal, unless the heroes specifically mention taking precautions against an ambush.

They're shooting to kill and have no need of prisoners. They'd like to get their hands on as much of the rangers' gear as possible, but causing casualties is their first priority. Should the team try to beat a retreat to their aircraft and escape, the leader grabs a rocket launcher from under a tarp in the skimmer and tries to bring it down.

The terrorists aren't so committed to their cause that they fight to the death. If more than half their number are Incapacitated, the rest flee, using the suddenly operational skimmer if possible, but scattering into the wilderness otherwise. If cornered, they surrender, but thanks to the fractured, cell-like nature of the command structure, they are able to provide little valuable intelligence on anything beyond their own small unit.

★ **Natural Order Cell Leader:** Use the stats for Terrorist Cell Leader on page 94. Armed with a laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2), survival knife (Str+d4), rocket launcher (Range 50/100/200, Damage 5d10, RoF 1, AP 40, HW), 3× particle packs, 2× rockets.

• **Natural Order Terrorists (2, plus 1 per hero):** Use the stats for Terrorist (page 94). Armed with a laser SMG (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 4, AP 2), survival knife (Str+1d4), 2× particle packs.

## IF AT FIRST...

This Savage Tale can be run multiple times as the Natural Order steps up its operation throughout the campaign. Each time, they change the details a little so as to not tip off the ranger team any sooner than necessary.





## RESCUE OPS

**Hook:** Borea, the Schlacter Foundation

The Schlacter Foundation requests the heroes check on the wellbeing of one of its field research teams. Of course, there's a whole lot more going on behind the scenes that the Foundation isn't telling.

## RUMBLE IN THE JUNGLE

The spacers either receive orders from JumpSec or are privately contacted by a representative of the Schlacter Foundation to travel to a remote camp and see what has happened to one of its own research teams. Schlacter's version of the story is that the team was releasing a group of lacerauns back into their natural habit. A large storm system moved through the area where the researchers were dropped off, and they've failed to make their last two daily updates.

What the Foundation isn't saying is that it genetically altered the lacerauns—ravagers, in fact—to exhibit psionic abilities. The team was conducting a field test of experimental implants intended to control the ravagers, while assessing

the full range of their abilities. Schlacter plans to sell the modified beasts to military and private security buyers, assuming they can get a handle on the whole “not biting the hand that feeds it—off” angle. Depending on how far along in the Plot Point Campaign the group is, Emil Schlacter may even have set the entire affair up in an attempt to remove the heroes as a potential thorn in his side.

## MIDDLE OF NOWHERE

The corporate contact explains the scientists had been air dropped, along with a crawler containing the animals to be freed, in a clearing and made their way overland for several days to a suitable habitat. The Foundation team's last known location is deep into Lower Vesta, hundreds of miles from the edge of the jungle. In reality, the corporation just wanted to make sure its field tests were safe from spying eyes. (Schlacter was careful to make sure his researchers were nowhere near the Natural Order headquarters on the Fall.)

The only way to reach the team in any reasonable amount of time is to be lowered in from the air via a jungle penetrator. The Foundation offers one of its own aircraft and



pilots to provide transportation to the last known site. The aircraft, a heavy-duty cargo hopper, will then return to the original clearing. The rangers are to determine the status of the researchers and return with them in the crawler to the drop point.

Actually, the Foundation just hopes the rescue team survives long enough to gather sufficient data for it to determine whether there's any point in sending its own recovery team to reclaim the ravagers. The bean counters decided, rather than risk actual corporate assets, to just let the local mercenaries test the waters for them. On the other hand, if Emil is setting the heroes up, he just wants them to die and anything else is a bonus.

## HELTER SKELTER

The researchers' last known location is located beneath nearly 200 feet of Leviathan's vegetation. Even with the jungle penetrator, getting to ground level is no picnic. Each hero must make an Agility roll or suffer Bumps and Bruises due to battering from tree limbs and vines during the descent.

At the jungle floor, it quickly becomes apparent something is amiss. The camp is where it's supposed to be, but it looks like a tornado has passed through. Tents are shredded, belongings scattered, and all fragile equipment has been destroyed. Even the crawler has been heavily damaged and requires two days of work and a Repair at -2 (due to lack of facilities and spare parts) to get running again.

There is no sign of the scientists, and worse, a search of the area and a successful Notice roll detects a large amount of blood. A successful Tracking roll finds a large number of tracks, some human and some that are clearly those of lacerauns. A woodsman who's seen ravager tracks can identify them as such. With a raise, the sharp-eyed team member is able to determine some of the laceraun tracks seem to end or start abruptly, perhaps indicating the animals are moving through the trees.

If the group contacts the Foundation to notify them of what they've discovered, the corporate representative tells them to remain on site and locate the scientists—or their remains. Should they demand an immediate pickup, the voice on the radio claims the aircraft has been forced to return to the predetermined landing point due to mechanical difficulties. The group must make its way overland to its location for evac.

## THE GAUNTLET

The psionic ravagers are far smarter than the Foundation suspected. The implants intended to control them never worked, but the lacerauns were clever enough to pretend as though they did to lull their captors. Once they were in the wild, they turned on the scientists and made quick work of them, killing most and keeping one or two alive to "play" with, at least for a little while.

They are also very aware of the spacers' arrival in the area. The ravagers hunt the heroes. The predators would have likely done so before the Foundation performed countless surgeries and experiments on them, but now they've developed a very distinct hatred for off-worlders.

Exactly what happens next depends on the heroes' actions. Regardless of whether the party remains in the area or immediately sets out on foot toward the pick-up site, the ravagers begin a campaign of terror and attrition.

Thanks to the Foundation's tinkering, the ravagers are extremely cunning. They can recognize ranged weapons and know exactly how dangerous they are. They set ambushes, attempt to separate the adventurers, lure them into traps, and so on, utilizing their psionic powers to maximum effect to lessen the edge the heroes' weapons may provide.

Luckily for the heroes, the creatures' newfound intelligence also makes them a bit more cautious. The lacerauns avoid direct assaults until they outnumber the heroes at least two to one, instead focusing on lone guards or stragglers if all else fails. Even then, they seldom attack with the entire pack, as they're not willing to risk complete annihilation should something go awry.

If the heroes make the trip to the pick-up site, the ravagers retreat into the wilderness and begin to breed—which, at least for now, is a worry for another day. Of course, if the entire mission was a set-up by Schlacter to eliminate the party, it's very possible the Foundation hopper was recalled on some vague pretense...

- **Foundation Ravagers (1 per hero):** See Ravager on page 87. Add Smarts d6, and the Psionic Special Ability (15 Power Points). They have the *invisibility* and *teleport* powers.







# CHAPTER SEVEN: BESTIARY

The indigenous fauna on Leviathan breaks down into two primary phyla, the lacerauns and the colemata. Both evolved from aquatic ancestors, but they are distinctly different in appearance and abilities. Most are still pretty darn big, though.

In spite of their exotic appearance, both forms of life count as “animals” for the purposes of Edges such as Beast Master or Beast Bond, and Powers like *beast friend*.

## LACERAUNS

Lacerauns, so-called because the creatures share some visual similarities with reptiles, make up the vast majority of all higher xenofoms on Leviathan. Although lacerauns are homothermic—or warm-blooded—they have a thick, scaly hide. Most have clawed appendages and toothed mouths as well.

Like most higher life forms in the Known Worlds, lacerauns are bilaterally symmetrical. All lacerauns possess lungs and breathe a nitrogen-oxygen mix similar to that found on Earth. While some lacerauns live in the shallow seas that cover Leviathan, they are not truly aquatic in that they have to surface to breathe.

What makes lacerauns different from many other off-world species is the fact they have three sets of limbs. Leviathan xenobiologists refer to them somewhat confusingly as “trischian” or three-hipped. Among the herbivorous species, all three limbs are usually legs and used only for locomotion. Carnivorous and omnivorous lacerauns often use their front pair of appendages in a prehensile manner—for grasping or holding.

**Sensory Organs.** Lacerauns appear to possess the usual five senses (sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch) to varying degrees.

All lacerauns have at least three paired sets of eyes. Each pair has a different visual range, either close, medium, or long—not unlike a pair of ancient tri-focal glasses. Their eyesight is probably more acute as a result, but they don’t

“see” any better than two-eyed creatures because they have to devote additional brain to filter the three sets of visual input. Herbivorous lacerauns often have a fourth pair of eyes positioned in the back of their skulls, allowing them to detect the approach of potential threats.

Many predatory species have a sixth sense left over from their aquatic ancestors. These carnivores can actually detect electrical fields within a short distance. This electroreception is sensitive enough to allow them to perceive the bioelectric fields produced by most living creatures, and “see” prey that might be hidden by darkness or foliage. An unfortunate side effect of this ability is that they are sometimes drawn to attack technological devices powered by electricity, occasionally in preference to actual living creatures.

## AQUATIC LACERAUNS

There are a few purely aquatic species listed in the bestiary, but they are by no means the only lacerauns living in the oceans of Leviathan. Nearly all of the action takes place on the planet’s landmasses, but there is still a lot of territory covered by water. It’s very possible your heroes may want to venture out on the high seas at some point.

To create additional marine varieties, simply apply the **Aquatic** Special Ability to the profiles for grazers, maulers, ankle-biters, and the like. You can even use the stats for truly massive lacerauns like the a-pex or behemoth to represent the largest species. Fins replace legs, but otherwise the general structure and abilities remain the same. And although lacerauns are air breathing rather than truly aquatic, the same profiles can be used to model even fish-like creatures if you wish.



## COLEMATA

The other major type of fauna on Leviathan are known as colemata, or more commonly among the settlers and hunters as “big, damn bugs.” That actually infuriates most xenobiologists, as these creatures possess no exoskeleton and usually have more or less than six legs. But as is often the case in these matters, popular vernacular carries more weight with the average person than scientific nomenclature, and most on the planet think of colemata as Leviathan’s equivalent of creepy crawlies.

Colematas come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes, but all possess hydrostatic skeletons. That means they use muscles to change the pressure of fluids in their bodies, allowing them to move. While these xenoforms have defined shapes, they tend to be very flexible, and well, fluid. Imagine a roach or spider formed of giant tongues, and you’ll kind of get the picture.

Free of the restrictions an exoskeleton places on size, colemata tend to be larger than insects as well, often reaching the size of a large dog or even bigger. They fill basically the same role in the ecosystem though—at least on land. In the oceans, colemata grow to enormous size and are often at the top of the food chain.

## XENOS

## A-PEX

As with the other xenoforms on the planet, scientists have a much longer name for the a-pex, but this is the name by which most of the settlers and visitors to Leviathan know this enormous carnivore. Its name comes from the fact the a-pex sits at the top of the food chain, at least on land. Offshore, that honor belongs to the planet’s namesake, the leviathan.





An a-pex measures about 40 feet long from the tip of its snout to the end of its thick tail, and stands about 12 feet high at its medial shoulder. This massive laceraun can raise its torso to a height of over 20 feet. Like many of Leviathan's predators, it travels mainly on its medial and hind legs, leaving its smaller, but powerful forelegs free for grasping and tearing its victims.

An a-pex is a relentless hunter, often pursuing its prey for hours or even days, sometimes only relenting if another, less challenging meal presents itself.

These creatures are solitary and very territorial. When an a-pex's hunting range overlaps with another of its species, a violent battle between the two predators is almost a foregone conclusion. However, the carnivores seldom fight to the death, with the loser surviving, but slinking away to cede the disputed territory to the winner.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+6, Vigor d12

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Tracking d6

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 17 (2)

**Special Abilities:**

- **Armor +2:** Thick hide.
- **Bite:** Str+d8.
- **Electroreception:** An a-pex has an organ that senses electrical impulses within 25". This allows it to halve all penalties for bad lighting when attacking targets that produce even minute electrical impulses, including invisible creatures or those otherwise concealed. It can even detect invisible or otherwise concealed from sight. While awake, a-pex is always considered an active guard for Stealth rolls.
- **Fleet-Footed:** These creatures roll a d10 running die instead of a d6.
- **Hardy:** A second Shaken result does not cause a wound.
- **Large:** Attackers add +2 to any attack roll directed against this creature.
- **Size +7:** These animals are nearly 40 feet long and weigh about 5 tons.

## ANKLEBITER

Leviathan colonists apply this name to any number of smaller, carnivorous lacerauns. While a xeno-taxonomist would be gravely offended by such a sweeping generalization, the diminutive predators are largely similar for a layman's purposes, minor physiological differences aside.

Anklebiters range in size from that of a Terran housecat to a small dog. Like other

predatory lacerauns, they can sense the bioelectrical emanations of other living creatures. Individually, the diminutive hunters are at best described as "feisty," but many of the species of lacerauns lumped together into this designation often hunt in packs of up to twenty or more. In such numbers, these tiny meat-eaters can be a threat to creatures even several times their size.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d8, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

**Special Abilities:**

- **Bite/Claw:** Str+d4.
- **Electroreception:** Each anklebiter has an organ that senses electrical impulses within 25". This allows it to halve all penalties for bad lighting when attacking targets that produce even minute electrical impulses, including invisible creatures or those otherwise concealed. It can even detect invisible or otherwise concealed from sight. While awake, an anklebiter is always considered an active guard for Stealth rolls.
- **Fleet-Footed:** Anklebiters d8 when running instead of a d6.
- **Frenzy:** These aggressive creatures can make two attacks a round with a -2 penalty to each attack.
- **Size -1:** An anklebiter is usually about the size of an average dog.

## ANGLER

Anglers are the closest thing Leviathan has to spiders—in this case, giant, man-sized spiders that fish for their prey. These colemata lurk in tree branches in the jungles, dangling long, muscular tongue analogs that they use to snare victims and drag them up to their waiting claws.

These carnivorous "bugs" have ten legs sprouting from their long torsos, with each of the legs ending in thick claws they use for both climbing and defense. A mass of eye buds sit above the long proboscis that houses their entangling tongue. They have developed an innate, chameleon-like ability to blend into their surroundings, making them even harder to pick out among the soaring foliage where they hide.



An angler's tongue can reach as far as 30 feet and is nearly as strong as steel cable. It takes a Notice roll at a -4 penalty to spot an angler's tongue hanging down through the branches of the jungle.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Climbing d10, Fighting d6, Notice d8, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

**Special Abilities:**

- **Claw:** Str+d4
- **Chameleon:** An angler that is motionless in a natural setting blends nearly perfectly with its background. It gains a +4 to all Stealth rolls and all ranged attacks against it suffer a -2 penalty.
- **Shock Absorbing:** The creature's hydrostatic chambers make it resistant to relatively slow impacts. It takes only half damage from blunt weapons, falls, and similar attacks.
- **Tongue:** An angler's preferred attack is to snare its prey with its incredibly long, sticky tongue. The creature can strike targets up to 10" away with its tongue. A fisher automatically initiates a grapple with victim with a successful (non-opposed) Fighting roll. Each round, including the first, it makes an opposed Strength roll, dragging its victim back towards its mouth 1d6" for each success and raise it obtains. The victim can break free by severing the tongue that has Parry 2 and Toughness 5. It only takes a single wound to cut it, but bullets and bludgeoning weapons do half damage to the tongue.
- **Wall Walker:** An angler moves its normal Pace along vertical and inverted surfaces. It needs to make a Climbing roll only in the most adverse conditions.

## BEHEMOTH

Behemoths not only the largest land herbivores on Leviathan, they're the largest land animals period. At over 60 feet long and 30 feet tall, even a-pexes are dwarfed by these plant-eating giants. On land, the very ground itself quakes when these beasts walk.

Due to their massive weight—over 30 tons—behemoths are only found in and around deltas and in the shallow waters near the shores of the planet's oceans, where they rely on the water to help support their weight. They eat a variety of terrestrial and aquatic plants, consuming vast amounts each day. For this reason, behemoths

are largely solitary beasts as a group of any size quickly depletes the local vegetation.

Their very size means few things pose any real threat to them. Behemoths tend to ignore any creatures that aren't attacking them, but an enraged or terrified behemoth is a uniquely frightening sight to behold—hopefully from a distance.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+6, Vigor d12+2

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 19 (2)

**Special Abilities:**

- **Armor +2:** Thick, leathery hide.
- **Earthquake:** A behemoth's massive bulk shakes the very ground within a Large Burst Template centered on itself when it walks or stomps on dry ground. Any creature of Size +1 or smaller in that area must make an Agility roll to avoid being knocked from its feet.
- **Eyes in the Back of Its Head:** Like many Leviathan animals, a behemoth has a set of visual receptors on the back of its head as well. When awake, it is always treated as an active guard for Stealth rolls.
- **Hardy:** A second Shaken result does not cause a wound.
- **Huge:** This behemoth's massive size makes it almost impossible to miss. Attackers may add +4 to their attack rolls to hit it.
- **Size +8:** A behemoth measures over 60 feet long and weighs more than 30 tons.
- **Stomp:** Str+d8+8. A behemoth can simply step on attackers Size +5 or smaller.
- **Tail Sweep:** A behemoth can lash all opponents in a 3" long by 6" wide area on its rear facing with its massive, thick tail. This is a standard Fighting attack and damage is equal to its Strength -2.

## BLOODWING

Bloodwings are Leviathan's version of mosquitos. These parasitic colematas are merely a pest to most of the indigenous life forms, but to man-sized visitors they're potentially fatal.

Like all colematas, bloodwings are soft-skinned. Their fleshy wings span about three feet tip-to-tip when fully extended, and they have eight, highly flexible leg appendages. A large proboscis occupies most of what passes for a head on these bloodsuckers, and most of their abdomen is used to house an expandable fluid sac that they fill through feeding.



Although they can't actually digest alien blood, a bloodwing's very limited brainpower is taxed by breathing and flapping its wings at the same time. As a result, these nasty xenofoms are prone to latching onto any creature with a pulse. And bloodwings have a knack for attaching themselves where their victims can't easily reach them. Any time one of these parasites latches onto a target, roll a d6. On a 1–2, the victim can attack the bloodwing normally; on a 3–4, the bloodwing's location allows only awkward strikes, applying a –2 penalty to any of the victim's physical attack rolls; and on a 5–6, the creature has attached to its victim's back, rendering the poor spacer unable to strike it directly.

Worse, the mild neurotoxin contained in their bite that numbs the larger, native animals is often paralytic to smaller creatures. More than one lone explorer has died from the planet's equivalent of a mosquito bite!

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d4, Strength d4, Vigor d4

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6

**Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 3

**Special Abilities:**

- **Bite:** Str+d4
- **Blood Drain:** A bloodwing that gets a raise on its Fighting attack does normal damage (plus

the bonus d6 for the raise) and attaches itself to its prey. Each round thereafter, the victim must make a Vigor roll or gain a Fatigue level as the bloodwing siphons blood. Removing the bloodsucker requires a Strength roll. Alternately, the bloodwing can simply be killed; while attached to its victim the creature has a Parry of 2. However, any failed attack roll strikes the victim on 1 on a 1d4. Fatigue lost to a bloodwing's blood drain is recovered at a rate of one every hour.

- **Darter:** Attackers suffer a –2 penalty to all attack rolls against a bloodwing if it is flying. This bonus does not apply when it is attached to a victim.
- **Flight:** Bloodwings have a Flying Pace of 12" and Climb of 3.
- **Poison:** A creature Size +1 or smaller Shaken or wounded by a bite must make a Vigor roll or suffer the effects of the bloodwing's venom. On a raise, the victim is unaffected by the poison. With a success, the victim is mildly lethargic, receiving –1 to all Agility and Agility-based skills for 2d6 rounds. With a failure, he is paralyzed for 2d6 rounds.
- **Shock Absorbing:** The creature's hydrostatic chambers make it resistant to relatively slow impacts. It takes only half damage from blunt weapons, falls, and similar attacks.
- **Size –1:** A bloodwing is roughly a foot and a half long, with wingspan of approximately one yard.





## BOOMER

Boomers are medium-sized herbivorous lacerauns that are easily recognizable by the fleshy lumps located along their backs roughly above each limb pair. They're even more quickly identified by the massive electrical discharges they can emit from their bodies. These discharges are so powerful they ionize the air nearby, creating a crackling sound not unlike a miniature thunderclap, hence their names.

These are the only land animals on Leviathan to exhibit this ability, but it appears to be an evolutionary counter to the natural sensitivity of most carnivorous lacerauns' to electrical fields. That sensitivity makes the discharge particularly painful to the predators, and a single use of the ability is usually enough to send them running. However, hunters and explorers are advised to be careful. Boomers are quick to generate these shocks if they feel threatened, and the discharges are of sufficient strength to injure, or even kill, humans and similar-sized species.

There are aquatic species capable of similar discharges, i.e. shockers, and boomers seem to have adapted their own ability to function using the high humidity found throughout the planet's equatorial regions.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d6, Stealth d4

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 12 (2)

**Special Abilities:**

- **Armor +2:** Thick hide.
- **Defense Field:** As a standard action, a shocker can discharge a burst of static electricity. This is an area effect attack that does 2d8 damage to all creatures within a Medium Burst Template centered on itself. Any laceraun in the area of effect must also make a Spirit roll with a penalty equal to the total damage caused by the discharge or be Panicked. A shocker is not affected by its own electrical field. The animal can use this ability a number of times equal to its Vigor die type before needing to "recharge" which takes approximately an hour.
- **Fleet-Footed:** Boomers roll a d10 when running instead of a d6.
- **Head Butt:** Str+d4
- **Size +4:** A boomer is about the size of a rhinoceros.

## DEATH CRAWLER (SWARM)

One of the most terrifying encounters for an explorer on Leviathan isn't a giant, alien dinosaur, but a creature roughly the size of a man's hand. Death crawlers are eight-legged colemata that, by themselves, inflict a painful, numbing bite. Unfortunately, death crawlers are never encountered alone—where there's one death crawler, there are usually thousands.

During most of the planet's year, these colemata are relatively sedate and harmless, hidden inside vast, underground nests consisting of miles of small tunnels. However, once a year, part of the hive separates to form a new hive in a new location. The new collective moves across the land in a massive swarm, often hundreds of yards wide, devouring every piece of organic matter in its path. A death crawler swarm may be dozens of yards across and as much as a hundred yards long. The migration usually covers dozens of miles before the swarm finds a location suitable for a new hive.

Colonists on Leviathan have learned to move quickly to burn out any nests discovered near settlements, because one nest means two the next year, then four, and so on.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d12+2

**Skills:** Notice d8, Stealth d8, Tracking d10

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 9

**Special Abilities:**

- **Bite:** A death crawler swarm inflicts hundreds of tiny bites every round to its victims. These hit automatically, causing 2d6 damage to everyone in within the swarm's boundaries. Damage is applied to the least armored location and has AP 2. Only sealed suits of Heavy Armor completely protect against this damage.
- **Poison:** Any creature that suffers a wound from a death crawler swarm attack must immediately roll Vigor (-2) or be paralyzed for 2d6 rounds.
- **Split:** A death crawler swarm can spawn smaller swarms to pursue foes that separate. The swarm can break off two Medium Burst Templates, one Medium and two Small Burst Templates, or even four Small Burst Templates as best suits the situation. Medium swarms have Toughness 7, and Small swarms have Toughness 5. The damage caused remains the same, regardless of size.



- **Swarm:** Parry +2; Cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage to the swarm. Area-effect weapons work normally, and a character can stomp to inflict her damage each round. A victim can temporarily thwart a death crawler swarm by submerging itself in water, but the creatures are known to wait for victims to surface.
- **Wave of Death:** A death crawler swarm is enormous in scale. It's nearly impossible for a group of individual characters to seriously damage one with anything short of a weapon of mass destruction. The stats above are for a portion of the swarm equal in size to a Large Burst Template.
- **Water-Walking:** A death crawler swarm can move its normal Pace over the surface of calm water.

## DRAKE

While there are numerous small, airborne lacerauns and colemata, the carnivorous drakes are the largest flying creatures on Leviathan. Their medial limb pairs have evolved into a set of over-large, membranous wings. They fold these wings close to their bodies when on the ground or climbing, but their cumbersome size renders these creatures and slow when earthbound.

Calling them truly "flying" is a bit of a misnomer, since drakes are actually better described as highly accomplished gliders. They're not capable of taking off from ground level and ascending, but they are capable of taking wing from cliff faces, trees, and similar heights and gliding considerable distances. Drakes have an almost innate sense for air currents and are capable of extending a glide for miles at a time.

Their claws are adapted for climbing and grasping, and they're seldom encountered on the ground very far from a gliding platform. Drakes are usually only found along the Fall and near the edges of Leviathan's vast jungles, where they have access to elevated launching points and open skies from which to swoop onto their unsuspecting prey.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Climbing d10, Fighting d6, Notice d8, Stealth d6

**Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 10 (2)

**Special Abilities:**

- **Armor +2:** Thick, scaled hide.
- **Claw/Bite:** Str+d6
- **Flying:** Pace of 12", Climb 0.

- **Size +2:** A drake is roughly the size of a horse, not counting its membranous wing span.
- **Swoop:** If a drake can fly at least 6" and descend at least 2" before attacking, it adds +4 to its damage.
- **Wall Walker:** Drakes can move over any moderately rough vertical surface at their normal Pace. They can move along the underside of tree limbs and other overhangs their claws can find purchase at half Pace.

## GRAZER

A grazer is typical of a wide range of medium-sized herbivores that populate Leviathan. They are one of the most common prey animals for the larger predatory species. Although they are herbivores, they can be aggressive during mating seasons and when protecting young. Still, these creatures are most dangerous when encountered in large herds, where a strange sight or loud noise may trigger a **Stampede** (see sidebar).

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 12 (2)

**Special Abilities:**

- **Armor +2:** Thick hide.
- **Fleet-Footed:** A grazer rolls a d10 when running, instead of a d6.
- **Kick:** Str+d6. Only usable against opponents in its rear facing.
- **Size +3:** A grazer is roughly the size of large horse.

## STAMPEDE!

Spacers caught in a stampede have to seek cover or get trampled into the dust. This requires an Agility roll (-2) each round. On a failure, the character is kicked by a few grazers as they thunder past, suffering 2d6+2 damage. Rolling a 1 on the Agility die, regardless of the Wild Die, means she's caught smack in the middle of the stampede and trampled. She takes 4d6+4 damage.

A hero must make two successful Agility rolls in a row (or succeed with a raise on one) to make it to safety.



## KROK

Krok is the blanket term hunters and colonists apply to the various semi-aquatic, carnivorous lacerauns that live in the planet's rivers and oceanic shallows. In general, these animals all have webbing on all six of their feet, long, tooth-filled jaws and powerful tails. Other than their size and extra pair of limbs, they share many characteristics with Earth crocodiles and alligators.

They tend to be ambush predators, lying in wait for prey rather than chasing it down. The average krok measures about 15' to 18' in length.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12+4

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 18 (4)

### Special Abilities:

- **Armor +4:** Thick, scaly hide.
- **Bite:** Str+d8
- **Hardy:** A second Shaken result does not cause a wound.
- **Large:** Attackers add +2 to any attack roll directed against this creature.
- **Semi-Aquatic:** Pace 6. A krok can hold its breath for 15 minutes before needing to make a Vigor roll to avoid drowning.
- **Size +4:** Kroks average about 17 feet in length.

## KROK, GIANT

These enormous specimens are usually only found in the shallows of one of Leviathan's oceans, but occasionally a storm may wash one into a coastal swamp or lake. They're one of the few creatures large enough to take down a behemoth by themselves, and they dwarf even the poster child for Vestal's marketing, the a-pex.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+6, Vigor d12+4

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 22 (4)

### Special Abilities:

- **Armor +4:** Thick, scaly hide.
- **Bite:** Str+d8
- **Gargantuan:** Attackers add +4 to any attack roll directed against this creature. Heavy Armor. Its attacks are treated as Heavy Weapons. Giant kroks aren't capable of stomp attacks due to their physiology.
- **Hardy:** A second Shaken result does not cause a wound.

- **Semi-Aquatic:** Pace 6. A krok can hold its breath for 15 minutes before needing to make a Vigor roll to avoid drowning.
- **Size +8:** A giant krok can reach up to 30 feet in length.
- **Tail Sweep:** A giant krok can sweep all opponents in its rear facing in a 3" long by 6" wide rectangle. This is an opposed roll of its Fighting versus the target's Agility. If the krok wins, the victim suffers damage equal to the krok's Strength plus its Size (d12+14), minus the victim's Size.

## LIGHTNING DARTER (SWARM)

These small, aquatic lacerauns are encountered in schools of tens or even hundreds of their kind. They are carnivorous, displaying both predatory and scavenger-like habits. Lightning darter schools are prone to attack any creature they come across, as their ability to generate fields of bioelectricity at will makes them capable of taking on prey much larger than themselves.

So far, these tiny dynamos are found only in the shallow regions of Leviathan's oceans, leading xenobiologists to believe they somehow rely on salinity to generate the electricity for their discharges.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d6, Swimming d8

**Pace:** —; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

### Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 10.
- **Shock:** A lightning darter school emits a pulsing burst of electricity when it attacks. Every creature within a Medium Burst Template takes 2d6 damage. This attack ignores all armor, except completely sealed, non-conductive armor.
- **Swarm:** Parry +2; Cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage to the swarm. Area-effect weapons work normally. Unlike against most swarms, the aquatic nature of a lightning darter school means heroes can't stomp to inflict damage each round. A small school may be only the size of a Large Burst Template, but large schools can be as much as 50 feet or more across.

## MAULER

This name is used by most Leviathan visitors and more than a few hunting guides to describe any of a wide number of medium-sized predatory lacerauns. While scientists might care about the fine points between the different species, most



spacers only care that these animals are more than happy to put them on the menu if given the opportunity.

Like all land vertebrates, these lacerauns are six-legged. However, unlike herbivores, the front pair of limbs are used for grabbing prey and ripping flesh from carcasses rather than locomotion. Some varieties are pack hunters while others stalk their victims solo.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Tracking d6

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

**Special Abilities:**

- **Bite/Fore Claw:** Str+d6
- **Electroreception:** Mauler has an organ that senses electrical impulses within 25". This allows it to halve all penalties for bad lighting when attacking targets that produce even minute electrical impulses, including invisible creatures or those otherwise concealed. It can even detect invisible or otherwise concealed from sight. While awake, mauler is always considered an active guard for Stealth rolls.
- **Rend:** If a mauler gets a raise on its Fighting attack roll, in addition to doing normal damage, it has seized its victim in its fore claws. Each round thereafter, it automatically deals its claw damage without needing to roll Fighting. The victim can break free by winning an opposed Strength roll on his action.
- **Size +2:** Maulers are about the size of horse.

## RAVAGER

Found only below the Fall on Vesta, ravagers are relatively small for a Leviathan carnivore, being only slightly larger than a human. Also, they're one of the few primarily arboreal members of the laceraun class. What they lack in size, they make up for in cunning, and ravagers are among the most feared creatures on the planets, at least to experienced hunters and explorers.

Ravagers use tactics far beyond those practiced by other animals on the planet. They attack from ambush, lay traps, and even bait potential prey. Of all the native creatures on Leviathan, ravagers are the closest to evolving true intelligence.

Their powerful claws are uniformly prehensile, allowing them to clamber easily up surfaces that appear unclimbable. This also allows them to attack their quarry with four claws while hanging from the remaining two. Their favored attack is to grab prey with their medial claws while rending with their formidable hind claws.

However, the most fearsome thing about encountering a ravager is that there is never just one. They invariably hunt in packs. Combined with their natural cunning, this makes ravagers a match for virtually any other predator on Leviathan—whether a native predator or an off-world hunter.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Tracking d6

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8





**Special Abilities:**

- **Bite/Fore Claw:** Str+d6
- **Electroreception:** Ravagers have an organ that senses electrical impulses within 25". This allows them to halve all penalties for bad lighting when attacking targets that produce even minute electrical impulses, including invisible creatures or those otherwise concealed. They can even detect invisible or otherwise concealed from sight. While awake, ravagers are always considered an active guard for Stealth rolls.
- **Frenzy:** A ravager can make two Fighting attacks a round at -2 to each roll.
- **Pounce:** One of these lacerauns often pounce on its prey, bringing its weight and extra claws to bear. A ravager can spring up 1d6", gaining +4 to its attack and damage. Its Parry is reduced by 2 until its next action.
- **Rake:** Str+d8+2. Ravagers suspended in trees can hang by their fore claws to rake with their massive hind claws. This is a Fighting attack that does Str+d8+2 if it hits.
- **Render:** If a ravager gets a raise on its Fighting attack roll, in addition to doing normal damage, it has seized its victim in its medial claws. Each turn thereafter, it automatically does its bite/fore claw (or rake) damage without needing to roll Fighting. The victim can break free by winning an opposed Strength roll on his action.
- **Size +1:** Ravagers are slightly larger than humans.
- **Wall Walker:** Ravagers can move over any moderately rough vertical surface at their normal Pace. They can move along the underside of tree limbs and other overhangs their claws can find purchase at half Pace.

**SAILFIN**

Sailfins are aquatic lacerauns that make their homes in the vast shallow seas and deltas of Leviathan. They take their name from the large, wing-like dorsal fin on their backs. These predators also possess a long, tooth-filled jaw that closes with nearly a ton and a half of bite force.

Using a complex structure of bone and muscle, these predators can extend and retract this fin to increase wind resistance, using it in effect exactly like a huge, fleshy sail. This allows them to take advantage of the strong winds that blow across the water's surface at dawn and twilight to overtake virtually any prey. They steer their bodies with a powerful tail that also serves to

propel them through the water while diving and during periods of calm.

There is more than one report of these carnivores chasing down a powered watercraft and attacking the crew, so most experienced boat crew keep one eye on any sailfins nearby, especially during windy conditions!

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d10, Swimming d8

**Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10

**Special Abilities:**

- **Bite:** Str+d8
- **Hardy:** A second Shaken result does not cause a wound.
- **Ram:** Sailfins skimming on the surface are able to use their incredible speed to make a powerful strike. If a sailfin on the surface can move at least 6" in a straight line before attacking, it adds +4 to its damage total.
- **Large:** Attackers add +2 to their attack rolls when attacking a sailfin due to its large size.
- **Semi-Aquatic:** Pace 8. Although not truly aquatic, a sailfin can hold its breath for 15 minutes before needing to make a Vigor roll to avoid drowning.
- **Size +3:** Sailfins reach up to 15 feet in length.
- **Wind-Powered:** In areas with winds of at least 20 mph, a sailfin uses its expandable dorsal fin as a sail and is able to increase its Pace to 12. The animal can only use this ability to skim on the surface of the water. Submerged, it is limited to its normal aquatic Pace.

**SCUTE BOAR**

These heavily muscled lacerauns are the tanks of Leviathan. They carry around massive bony plates on their backs and skulls to provide armor against the planet's many predators. They're ponderously slow moving, but also tough as sun-dried leather and able to shrug off damage that would stagger most others of their kind.

Although the boar's thick, natural armor does protect against many carnivores, the bony spikes protruding along the scute boar's spine, sides, and tail are a more effective deterrent. Any creature biting or otherwise attacking a scute boar impales itself on its victim. These bony projections allow the lumbering herbivore to fend off attackers with its head or powerful tail, making it difficult for a predator to do battle with one without suffering serious injury. Not surprisingly, scute boars have few natural enemies.



Although scute boars are plant eaters, they are, by nature, cantankerous animals and threaten anything that wanders into their line of sight. Fortunately, they move slowly enough to allow most trespassers to escape their wrath.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d6

**Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 17 (4)

**Special Abilities:**

- **Armor +4:** Thick hide and bony plates.
- **Bone Spikes:** A scute boar's back and sides are covered with bony, spike-like protrusions. Any melee attacker suffers damage equal to its own Str+d4 if she does not succeed on her Fighting attack with a raise.
- **Head Butt:** Str+d6.
- **Eyes in the Back of Its Head:** Like many Leviathan animals, this creature has a set of visual receptors on the back of its head as well. When awake, it is always treated as an active guard for Stealth rolls.
- **Hardy:** A second Shaken result does not cause a wound.
- **Large:** Attackers add +2 to any attack roll directed against this creature.

- **Size +5:** A scute boar is roughly the size of a small elephant.
- **Tail Sweep:** The scute boar can lash all opponents in a 3" long by 6" wide area on its rear facing with its massive, spiked tail. This is a standard Fighting attack and damage is equal to its Str+d6.

## SCRAT

This is the common name for any of a hundred or so species of small herbivores and scavengers on Leviathan. Most settlers and hunters view these lacerauns as either annoyances or vermin. In the wild, they feed on low-lying plants, but are prone to swarming over an expedition's rations if left poorly secured.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d6

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (2)

**Special Abilities:**

- **Armor +2:** Scaly hide.
- **Electroreception:** Like most lacerauns, scrats have an organ that senses electrical impulses within 25". This allows them to halve all penalties for bad lighting when attacking targets that produce even minute electrical impulses, including invisible creatures or those otherwise concealed. They can even





detect invisible or otherwise concealed from sight. While awake, a scrat is always considered an active guard for Stealth rolls.

- **Head butt/Bite:** Str+d4
- **Fleet-Footed:** Scrats roll a d10 when running instead of a d6.
- **Size -1:** Most scrats are about the size of large dogs.

## SCYLLA

Internal differences aside, the scylla shares a number of morphological traits with a terrestrial octopus. Both have roughly spherical central bodies with a mass of tentacle-like limbs sprouting from one side. Both are aquatic and predatory in nature. However, scyllas, having evolved on Leviathan, are considerably more dangerous, at least to the average off-world visitor.

Scyllas grow considerably larger than the average octopus, averaging several hundred pounds in weight and reaching up to 10 feet long from the tip of its tentacles to the top of its "head." Their tentacles alone measure over 6 feet in length. The number of tentacles possessed by one of these creatures varies according to the individual and ranges from as few as five to as many as ten. Seven is by far the most common amount, and accounts for the colemata's mythological name.

Scyllas exhibit camouflage abilities common to some octopuses, with their natural color ranging from grayish-pink to pale white speckled with green. They are also more aggressive than the terrestrial animal and have been known to pursue their prey into the shallows and even a short distance on land.

These colemata don't have teeth or a beak to tear flesh from their prey. Instead, they store their kills underwater, allowing the flesh to decay and soften to the point where they can use their tentacles to tear bits off for feeding purposes.

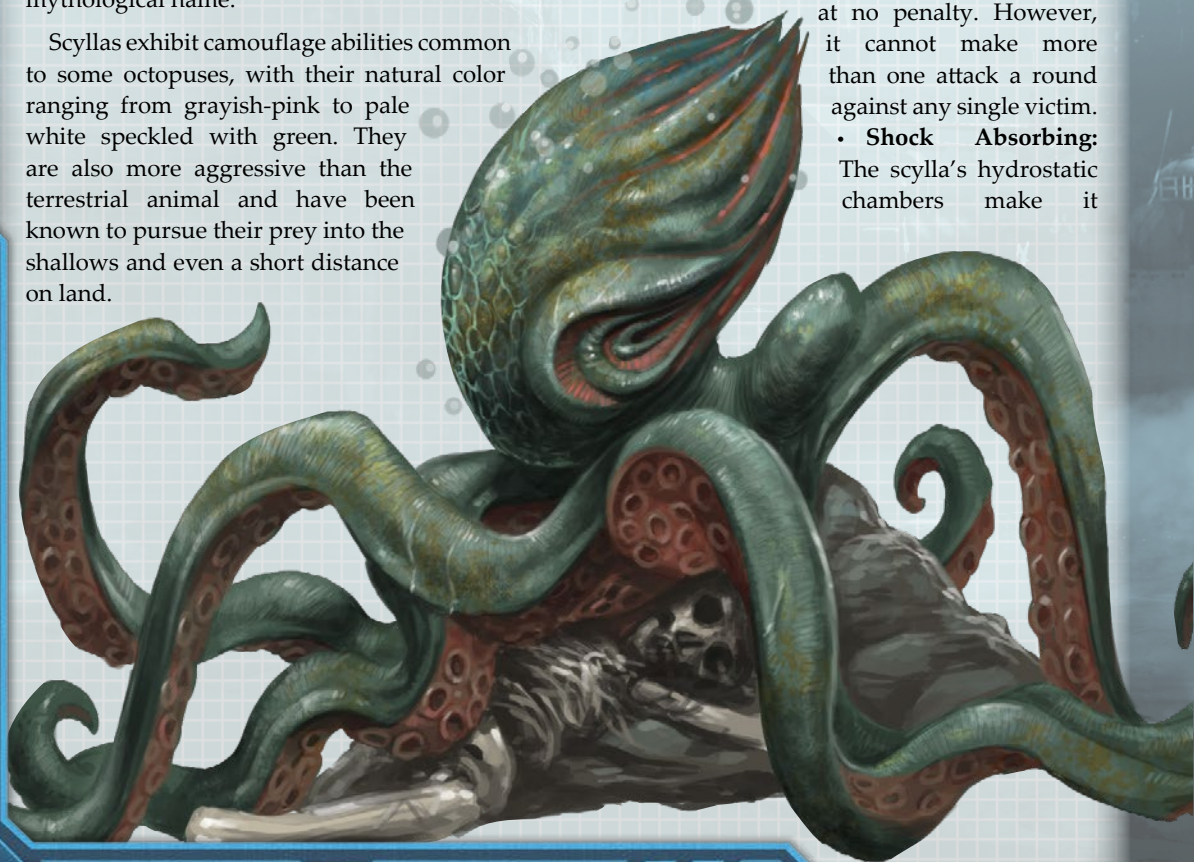
**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d10

**Pace:** 2; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11 (2)

**Special Abilities:**

- **Aquatic:** Pace 10.
- **Armor +2:** Tough, rubbery skin.
- **Chameleon:** A scylla that is motionless in an aquatic setting blends nearly perfectly with its background. It gains a +4 to all Stealth rolls and all ranged attacks against it suffer a -2 penalty.
- **Constrict:** If a scylla's Fighting attack succeeds with a raise, it has wrapped a tentacle around its victim. It deals normal tentacle damage that round and each round thereafter. The victim may attempt to escape on his action by getting a raise on a Strength roll opposed by the scylla's Strength.
- **Mass of Tentacles:** A scylla can attack a number of targets up to the number of its tentacles in a single round at no penalty. However, it cannot make more than one attack a round against any single victim.
- **Shock Absorbing:** The scylla's hydrostatic chambers make it





resistant to relatively slow impacts. It takes only half damage from blunt weapons, falls, and similar attacks.

- **Size +2:** The average scylla is about the same mass as a horse. Some specimens grow considerably larger, up to Size +5.
- **Tentacle:** Str+d6. Reach 1.

## SCYLLA, GIANT

These huge versions of scyllas live in the dark depths of the planet's deep-water oceans, where they are the undisputed top of the food chain. Scylla continue growing until they die or are limited by the depth of the water in which they live. Giant scylla are actually just very, very large versions of the variety encountered in the shallower waters of Leviathan.

Measured end-to-end, one of these enormous creatures can reach over 70 feet in length. The high pressures help support the weight of these enormous beasts, and they seldom come near the surface, even far out in deep water. They almost never venture into the shallow coastal seas.

These oceanic horrors are ravenous predators, prone to view everything as potential prey. In rare instances, severe weather forces one of these monsters close to shore, where it may wreak havoc on an ecosystem. A giant scylla, like its younger versions, can even drag itself onto land briefly in pursuit of prey. Luckily for the shallow-water and land denizens of the planet, the creatures are uncomfortable outside the high pressures of the ocean depths.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+10, Vigor d12+6

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d10

**Pace:** 2; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 23 (2)

**Special Abilities:**

- **Aquatic:** Pace 10.
- **Armor +2:** Tough, rubbery hide.
- **Chameleon:** A giant scylla that is motionless in an aquatic setting blends nearly perfectly with its background (assuming the area is large enough to contain it). It gains a +4 to all Stealth rolls and all ranged attacks against it suffer a -2 penalty.
- **Constrict:** If a scylla's Fighting attack succeeds with a raise, it has wrapped a tentacle around its victim. It deals normal tentacle damage that round and each round thereafter. The victim may attempt to escape on his action by getting a raise on a Strength or Agility roll opposed by the leviathan's Strength.

- **Gargantuan:** Heavy Armor. Man-sized creatures receive a +4 bonus to attack rolls. A giant scylla can't bring its full weight to bear when making an attack and is incapable of making stomp attacks. Regardless, its attacks are still considered Heavy Weapons.
- **Mass of Tentacles:** A giant scylla can attack a number of targets up to the number of its tentacles in a single round at no penalty. However, it cannot make more than one attack a round against any creature smaller than Huge.
- **Shock Absorbing:** A giant scylla's hydrostatic chambers make it resistant to relatively slow impacts. It takes only half damage from blunt weapons, falls, and similar attacks.
- **Size +10:** A giant scylla's central body is over 40 feet across and its tentacles reach up to 30 feet in length.
- **Tentacle:** Str+d6. Reach 5.

## SIREN CREEPER

Siren creepers are relatively innocuous-appearing, ground vines. A given creeper has several vines growing from a single root ball. The vines themselves may exceed 20 feet in length, but never extend further than 15 feet or so from the central stalk. Any excess length curls back inside that radius.

Siren creepers continually discharge spores from their central stalk, which serve both offense and defensive purposes for the plant. These spores have a strong effect that combines elements of a hallucinogen and a sedating narcotic on nearly every creature exposed to them. The spores drive the plant's prey into a drug-induced coma, leaving it to die from exposure.

The creeper's vine system draws sustenance directly from the corpses of its prey, rapidly decomposing them. The vines are capable of breaking down even bone and similar organic substance, although they are the last parts of a creature to be broken down. The fleshy bits of a man-sized victim are consumed within two days, with each additional +1 Size adding another day to the process. Skeletal remains take a few weeks, meaning there are usually a few bones to warn off those smart enough to recognize them for what they are.

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d4, Strength d4, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Notice d6

**Pace:** —; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 6

**Special Abilities:**



- **Plant:** Immune to Fear and Tests of Will.
- **Spore Cloud:** A siren creeper releases minute spores in a Large Burst Template centered on itself. Any creature taking a breath within the cloud must make a Spirit roll or be overcome by an effect similar to that produced by a combination of powerful hallucinogens and narcotics. Any victim that fails the Spirit roll effectively becomes comatose, collapsing near the base of the creeper's roots. This hallucinatory coma persists until the victim is removed from the spore cloud. Each day, the affected creature must make the usual Vigor rolls against hunger and thirst, as well as any other environmental hazards (see *Savage Worlds*). A filtered or self-contained oxygen supply protects against this attack.

## SPITTER

One of the smaller examples of predatory lacerauns, spitters are also the only species discovered so far that is venomous. These creatures are slightly larger than a good-sized dog, but are far more aggressive than their size would lead one to believe. While their coloration is a fairly unremarkable brownish-green, spitters are easily identified by the inflatable air bladders located behind their lower jaws.

A spitter's fangs are envenomed, and a bite from one of these beasts is often enough to kill a man-sized victim. However, spitters can force air from their distinctive bladders through their poison glands, spraying the toxin out through their snouts. Although the venom is far less potent delivered this way, it remains effective enough even as a dispersed contact poison to temporarily put smaller creatures out of action, at least long enough for the carnivore to close the distance and use its more powerful bite.

Spitters tend to be ambush predators more than stalkers, lying in wait for victims rather than actively hunting them. Fortunately, these horrors tend to be solitary creatures except during mating season, or if some poor explorer is unlucky enough to stumble on a crèche of young.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Swimming d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (2)

**Special Abilities:**

- **Armor +2:** Scaly hide.
- **Bite:** Str+d6.

- **Poison Bite (-2):** A spitter's bite delivers Venomous poison to its victim.
- **Venom Blast:** As an action, a spitter can spray poison in front of it. Place the small end of a Cone Template at the tip of its snout with the large end anywhere in its front 180°. The spitter and any creature touched by the template must make opposed Agility rolls; the spitter receives a +2 bonus. Any defender failing the roll is splattered with the venom and must make a Vigor roll or be Shaken. If the spitter wins with a raise, the Vigor roll is at -2.
- **Size -1:** Spitters are only slightly larger than a dog.

## SENTIENTS

The characters listed below are human by default. However, if it's appropriate to your campaign, members of nearly every sentient race can be found on Leviathan, both as visitors and citizens. Insert the appropriate racial abilities to transform these characters into the species of your choosing.

## HUNTER

Leviathan draws its share off-world hunters seeking to take down the closest thing the known universe currently offers to an actual dinosaur. Only the best—or most foolhardy—are willing to pit their skills and weapons against creatures big enough to eat a car. And since a hunting trip to a distant frontier planet isn't cheap, Leviathan's big game hunters tend to be very well equipped.

This profile can also be used for one of the planet's experienced game guides. In that case, add Knowledge (Area Knowledge) d8 to the skills list.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Boating d6, Driving d6, Fighting d6, Notice d8, Piloting d6, Shooting d8, Survival d8, Swimming d4, Tracking d8

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Overconfident

**Edges:** Woodsman

**Gear:** Laceraun rifle (Range 50/100/200, Damage 3d10, RoF 1, AP 6, HW), survival knife (Str+d4), binoculars, motion tracker, personal repeller, static repeller field generator (small).





## JUMPSEC SECURITY OFFICER

These are the run-of-the-mill security professionals who serve at settlements and facilities serviced by JumpCorp Security. Their primary mission is to maintain the peace and enforce order among the off-world population and sentient races in the settled areas. However, they simply aren't equipped to deal with the scale of threat posed by most of Leviathan's native life.

This profile can also be used for internal security officers at other corporate facilities on Leviathan.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Driving d4, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d6, Survival d4

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9 (4)

**Hindrances:** —

**Edges:** —

**Gear:** Body armor (+4), laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2), laceraun prod (victim must make Vigor roll at -2 or be Shaken), commlink, handcuffs, personal repeller, two spare magazines.

## JUMPSEC PARAMEDIC

These dedicated individuals are called on to conduct search and rescue operations in Leviathan's backcountry—which is the majority of the planet. Although, more often than not, they are employed to save the bacon of some rich tourist who strayed too far from his base camp, no trip into Leviathan's jungles or swamps is a walk in the park. These guys are at the top of their game and take every mission seriously.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Driving d4, Fighting d4, Healing d8, Knowledge (Medicine) d6, Notice d6, Piloting d6, Shooting d6, Survival d6, Swimming d4

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 9 (4)

**Hindrances:** Heroic

**Edges:** Healer

**Gear:** Body armor (+4), laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2), commlink, med-gel, medi-scanner, personal data device, personal repeller, survival kit, two spare magazines.



## PILOT

Atmospheric flyboys can make a comfortable living on Leviathan, either as a freelance bush pilot or on a corporate payroll. The planet's largely unsettled nature means anyone who plans on taking a long flight to the middle of nowhere better have more skills than just those needed to get a hopper on and off the landing field. Leviathan pilots are usually fairly experienced woodsmen, impromptu mechanics, and prepared to deal with a pack of hungry maulers.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Driving d4, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Piloting d8, Repair d6, Shooting d6, Survival d6

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Overconfident

**Edges:** —

**Gear:** Laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2), survival knife (Str+d4), personal repeller, commlink, repair kit.

## TERRORIST

Rank-and-file cell members are the most fanatical supporters of the Natural Order's goals. They're not just brainwashed, they're brain-scoured. While few have actual military experience, all have been mercilessly trained by the Natural Order's mercenary cadre. They're well-schooled in guerrilla warfare tactics and are sometimes more than a match for private or even corporate security forces, particularly in a rugged environment like that found on Leviathan.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Boating d4, Driving d4, Fighting d6, Knowledge (Demolitions) d4, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Survival d6, Swimming d4, Throwing d4

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Death Wish (furthering the Natural Order's goals), Vow (Major: Natural Order)

**Edges:** —

**Gear:** Laser rifle (Range 30/60/120, Damage 3d6, RoF 3, AP 2), survival knife (Str+d4), commlink.

## ★ TERRORIST CELL LEADER

Cell leaders are given extensive insurgency and tactical training, as well as intensive schooling in sabotage and similar techniques. They're trusted to then pass this on to their ground operatives as needed for a given mission. In addition, they're just as heavily indoctrinated into the Natural Order's philosophy, while also receiving coaching in leadership and motivational skills.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Boating d4, Driving d4, Fighting d6, Knowledge (Demolitions) d8, Notice d8, Piloting d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Survival d6, Swimming d4, Throwing d4

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Death Wish (furthering the Natural Order's goals), Vow (Major: Natural Order)

**Edges:** Command, Hold the Line!, Inspire, Combat Reflexes

**Gear:** Laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2), survival knife (Str+d4), commlink.







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