ALIENS

&

ARTÍFACTS™

A Sourcebook For

Space Master™

ALIENS & ARTIFACTS ™

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Aliens & Artifacts (A&A)*. This is the first in a projected series of *A&As* which are intended to provide **Space Master** players and GMs with new collections of sentient, extra-terrestrial races, along with alien beasts and technology. Many of the alien races can even be used as player characters in a **Space Master** campaign. However, keep in mind that all sections of this book should be considered as optional material. A GM should carefully examine each section of material before allowing it in his campaign.

A WORD FROM THE AUTHOR

This book is a companion volume to **Space Master**. As far as I know, it's the only supplement for *any* game system that has attempted to present a comprehensive look at extraterrestrial races, alien technology and alien creatures under a single cover.

In designing the races and creatures in this book, I've tried to hold a middle ground between hard science and space opera. My emphasis has been on creating xenosentients that are interesting to interact with while still being obviously alien.

I've attempted to get away from creating too many "monster races." Some of the aliens *have* been deliberately designed as enemies of humanity, but even the xenophobic Tezcat and slavemongering Inyx can still show a good side, if only to their own people.

How you use this book is up to you. My favorite scenario has always been to drop PCs on a planet inhabited by a technological alien race, give them a specific mission to keep them focused, and see how they do. Dealing with an advanced, highly intelligent race on their home ground is a lot different then meeting a few aliens in a starport bar. For this reason, I've spent some time detailing each alien homeworld, and covered aspects of clothing, art, and architecture. No one can even attempt to give a complete picture of an entire culture, but a few snapshots here and there to convince the players they aren't on Spaceport Earth can go a long way in maintaining atmosphere.

1.1
ALIEN LIFE

The notion of alien life is as basic to science fiction as space travel itself. Earth-like life — the only life we know of — has two major prerequisites. Both must be present for "life as we know it" to exist. The first prerequisite is water, which acts as the medium in which all life-sustaining chemical reactions occur. The second is the availability of carbon atoms, which exhibit a unique ability to combine with hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen atoms in long chain molecules, creating the complex compounds that form the basis of life. Where carbon atoms and liquid water exist, there is a good chance of finding some type of life, even if it's only something like a bacteria or protozoa.

Unfortunately, on many planets, including all other worlds but Earth in our solar system, the environmental conditions are too severe for water and carbon atoms to exist at the same time. But "carbon-based" life is not the only possibility.

In environments too arid, hot or cold for liquid water, substances other than water might be able to act as a medium for the necessary chemical reactions. Liquid methane and ammonia show some promise at very low temperatures, and sulphur at high ones. Gas giants such as Jupiter or Saturn may contain the right blend of heat, pressure and atmospheric gases to enable very alien life to evolve, although it would likely float in the atmosphere rather than live on the surface of the world. The Sheol are an example of such a race.

For non-terrestrial worlds, alternatives to carbon-based life are possible, perhaps fluorocarbons or silicon, both of which can form the long molecular chains necessary for life. Unfortunately for silicon based creatures, "life" also implies a certain degree of structure and the ability to reproduce. Silicon atoms may be a bit *too* stable. There's a lot of rock about on earth, and none of it seems to be talking to us. Still, its a possibility, although maybe not for an intelligent creature.

Fluorine or chlorine-based life almost presents the opposite problem. A fluorocarbon based life form might be very energetic, but it certainly wouldn't be able to live on a world we would find habitable, since liquid sulfur, maybe even sulfuric acid, would substitute for water. This book describes one fluorine- based race, the Inheritors.

Even farther out, but still vaguely possible, are beings of gas or plasma, perhaps evolving within interstellar space or the hearts of stars. Because of its low density, a plasmoid or gas creature would probably have to be *very* large in order to have enough atoms to support a complex "nervous system." Still, some scientists believe that this kind of creature is at least theoretically possible — the Avatars are an illustration of this type of race, and the Whirl-Kohl in **Space Master** are another.

1.2
USING THIS BOOK

Unless you are running a space opera-style campaign where entire galaxies of creatures can be met in a spaceport bar, the GM should probably avoid introducing every alien species, artifact, and creature in the book to the players at once. This is especially true of the new alien races, who can quickly cause "cultural overload" if inserted too quickly into an ongoing campaign. Instead, take the time to decide on the exact roles of each race in the campaign.

A few aliens, whether friends or enemies, will be close acquaintances to mankind, trading, fighting, living and working within or next door to human space, perhaps becoming members of human political systems. These are races that will have been discovered early, and deliberate attempts at assimilation have made their physiology, psychology and society accessible to human observers. Alien PCs will be most likely to come from these races. In *Aliens & Artifacts* races such as the Drakarans, Evantha, Inyx or M'sia could fulfil this role.

Other aliens should be enigmatic, shadowy beings, lurking on the fringes of human exploration, their presence known, but shrouded in mystery. Think of the Japanese, before American gunboats forced their integration into western society, or the Snee or Whirl-Kohl of the **Space Master** universe. At first, characters will know little or nothing about them. When the PCs encounter them through war, shipwreck, or path-breaking trade or diplomatic mission they will gradually discover a little about what makes these races tick, both mentally and physically. Races like the Lithkind, Sheol, Spyders or Tezcat could fit the bill here.

For convenience, the individual racial descriptions assume that all races have already been encountered — at least to a limited degree — by humanity. But it can be more exciting to make a race totally unknown, waiting for intrepid explorers to establish *first contact*, giving the player characters their chance to write themselves into the history tapes.

When planning a first contact adventure, it may be wise to make up a new name for the race and alter some a few obvious details of appearance to keep any players who may have read this book guessing. Feel free to weave the adventurers into the background descriptions. For instance, according to *Aliens & Artifacts* the Inheritors have made contact with Imperial merchants; fine, but that doesn't mean that those pioneering traders can't be the PCs!

You can even decide that a race that the book says actually exists (for instance, the Drakarans) are really long dead (or only *seem* to be dead), with only its artifacts (which may range from scattered rubble to entire cities) left behind for archaeologists to find and scientists to puzzle over to give clues as to the nature of the vanished civilization. Use the book to decide what their artifacts and ruined cities look like. Maybe later the characters could find a lost colony of that species, or travel back in time to meet their ancestors! Don't be shy about altering the races described in this book to better fit a campaign. If you think the Evantha should be a democratic society with medieval technology instead of a star-faring dictatorship, or the Inheritors should have evolved in an asteroid belt rather than a Dyson sphere, go ahead and change it!

1.3
CREATING ALIEN CHARACTERS

Players may wish to use some of the alien races described in this book as player characters. With the GM's permission, the following races are perfectly suitable for PCs: Devi (shiverbat), Drakaran, Evantha, Lithkind, M'sia, Spyder and Tezcat*.

The GM should think very carefully before letting a player have a character from one of these races as a PC, but experienced players may wish to give it a try: Avatar, Inheritor, Inyx*, Metamorph, Sheol (messenger) and Valkyrie*.

Note: * *indicates an "enemy" race, overtly or covertly hostile to humanity. Unless everyone is playing members of this race, the character is likely to be a renegade, possibly hunted by his own people.*

The following races are not suitable for use as PCs under any circumstances, and should be reserved for use as NPCs: Devi (intelligence), Shai-en-Rin, and Sheol (squid mother).

When selecting a character, remember that the PC will have to interact with the rest of the party, and so should either be able to speak Imperial Standard Anglaman, or have some form of translator or telepathic powers. Life support can also be a problem: for instance, an Avatar character, while interesting, cannot exist within normal gravity for more than a few hours, so unless the campaign's adventurers are largely set in space, Avatars will be unsuitable as PCs.

ALIEN CHARACTER GENERATION

To generate an alien PC, look up the *System Notes* section at the end of the race's description. Some races have special procedures for generating characters, or restrictions on what skills may be learned.

Unless the *System Notes* indicate otherwise, follow the usual procedure for creating human characters, but adjust statistics as described on the *Alien Statistics Chart* at the end of this section.

BACKGROUND OPTIONS

Section 7.0 of the *SM Player Book* discusses various Background Options which may be taken by some characters. The recommended number of Background Options for each race are: Avatar (1), Devi Shiverbat (1), Drakaran (2), Evantha (2), Lithkind (3), Inheritor (2), Inyx (1), Metamorph (2), M'sia (2), Sheol Messenger (1), Spyder (3), Tezcat (3).

PC aliens must automatically take the Race-Friend option from the *Special Status* category to simulate the player's own knowledge of humanity. This counts as one of the allowed Option picks. If a player can convince the GM that he or she can actually role play an alien who is ignorant of human society, then this requirement can be waived.

With the exception of the Evantha and Lithkind who are quite close to humanity in outlook, alien PCs should not roll on the Special Status category chart, since it can produce "personality types" that are greatly at variance with racial norms. Devi Shiverbats and Sheol Messengers should not roll on the Special Items category, and the GM should make sure that other races do not receive gadgets that are unlikely, (e.g., a GEM car for an Evanthan PC, since the Psychology section of the Evantha description states that they detest any vehicles other than aircraft).

1.5
ROLE PLAYING ALIENS

Anyone running one of the alien races in this book should carefully read the *Psychology* and *Social Structure* sections of that race's description. Take care to have the character conform to racial behavior patterns, although some eccentricities are possible — why else would the character be adventuring among humans?

It's difficult to role play an alien properly, so the easiest thing to do, at least to begin with, is to select one of the more distinctive racial characteristics and emphasize it to the exclusion of most else. Play a Tezcat as a brave but xenophobic bigot, a Lithkind as a new-age mystic, or a M'sia as a pacifist flower-child. This serves to distinguish your character from humans, and providing you don't go overboard and become too obnoxious for your fellow players, can be a lot of fun.

Gradually you can introduce other traits to your character: Tezcat may be racial bigots, but they are also very playful among friends, and their emotions are mercurial: angry one minute and affectionate the next. As you continue to play the alien, you can start to personalize your character, differentiating him from other members of his race. For instance, he could be a rather mild bigot compared to other Tezcat (after all, he's living with humans!), and surely there is a reason? Perhaps he doesn't follow the Shaper Faith, their xenophobic religion. Ah, so he's a heretic? Maybe he was once a priest and was expelled! And so on.

Finally, remember that the descriptions of alien psychology and sociology are necessarily brief, and can only scratch the surface of an entire race's way of thinking, its culture, and its technology. The racial descriptions are just guidelines: feel free to add or delete behavior patterns, customs, religions or entire societies. In a single alien race, hundreds of subcultures, ethnic groupings, and personality types will exist, even if the distinctions between many will only be noticeable to fellow members of that race.

GMs should put some effort into making sure that players who take alien characters actually play them *as aliens*. Keep an eye out for players claiming that their character was "raised by humans." This is often an excuse for playing an extraterrestrial as a human in a funny suit with strange powers. If an alien PC steps way out of character (e.g., a Tezcat being best buddy with a M'sia, even one who saved his life), GMs should warn the player with a stern "a (insert the race) would never, never, never act like that," and then explain why.

1.4 ALIEN RACIAL STATISTICS TABLE

Race	St	Qu	Pr	In	Em	Co	Ag	SD	Me	Re	Ap	SlDp	StDt	RecMp	StLng	TyHtD	MxHts	Ess.	Chan.	Men/Tel	Pois.	Dis.
Devi Shiverbat	-5	+10	-5	-5	-5	0	+15	-5	0	0	-10	5	+1	1.5x	0	D10	125	-50	-50	0	+10	+50
Drakaran	+20	0	0	0	-5	+25	-5	+5	+5	0	0	10	0	1.5x	6	D12	180	-75	-75	-20	+15	+5
Evantha	-15	+20	0	0	0	0	+10	+5	0	0	-5	12	1	1x	2	D8	100	-50	-50	-10	0	0
Human	+5	0	0	0	0	0	0	+5	0	0	0	12	0	1x	2	D8	120	-50	-50	0	0	0
Inheritors																						
Drone	-10	+5	-5	-5	0	0	+10	+5	+5	0	-10	10	+1	1x	2	D6	90	-50	-50	-20	+50	+25
Queen	0	0	+20	0	0	0	+5	0	+5	+5	-10	12	+1	1x	2	D10	150	-50	-50	0	+50	+25
Warrior	0	+10	-5	-10	-10	+5	+10	+5	0	-5	-10	8	+1	1.5x	1	D10	150	-50	-50	-20	+50	+25
Worker	-5	0	-20	-20	-10	0	+5	0	0	-15	-10	8	+1	1.5x	1	D8	120	-50	-50	-50	+50	+25
Inyx	0	0	0	-5	-15	0	0	+10	+15	+5	-20	10	0	1x	2	D10	150	-50	-50	+25	+10	+40
Lithkind	-20	+5	0	+10	+10	0	+5	+5	+5	0	+5	5	-1	1x	2	D6	90	-20	-20	-20	0	0
Metamorph	0	+10	0	0	-5	+10	+10	0	0	0	?	2	-2	2x	3	D8	120	-50	-50	0	+5	+20
M'sia	+20	-5	+15	+5	+10	+15	-10	+15	+10	+20	-30	10	0	2x	3	D12	180	-20	-50	+5	+10	+10
Sheol Messengers																						
Adaptive	+20	0	0	+5	-5	+15	+5	0	0	+5	-20	5	+2	1x	1	D20	220	-50	-50	-20	+20	+50
Facilitator	-5	-5	-20	0	+10	+5	-5	0	+20	+15	-40	5	+2	.5x	1	D12	180	-50	-50	0	+15	+40
Interpreter	-5	-5	-10	0	-20	-5	-15	-15	+5	+5	-15	2	+5	.5x	2	D8	100	-50	0	-50	0	0
Monitor	+30	+5	0	-5	-15	+20	+5	0	-5	-10	-30	5	+2	1.5x	1	D20	250	-50	-50	-20	+20	+50
Spinner	+15	0	0	-10	-20	+15	0	0	-10	-15	-40	5	+2	1x	1	D20	200	-50	-50	-50	+15	+40
Spyder	-10	+5	0	0	+15	-5	+10	+5	+30	0	0	12	0	1.2x	2	D8	100	-40	-50	0	-10	0
Tezcat	0	+20	+15	0	-10	+20	+20	0	0	0	+15	10	0	1x	2	D8	100	-50	-50	0	0	0

Key:

Soul Departure (SlDp): rounds before the "soul" of the being departs after death and he/she/it is no longer revivable.

Stat Deterioration (StDt): number added to any stat deterioration rolls made because of injury or death.

Recovery Multiplier (RecMp): this is a function of the relative time it takes a being to heal.

Starting Languages (StLng): the number of languages initially known. See "Languages" in the racial descriptions.

Type of Hit Die (TyHtD): the die used when determining hits — larger die sizes indicate bigger/tougher aliens.

Notes:

1) Human stats are provided for comparison purposes.

2) Most races have special abilities — see their descriptions.

3) All bonuses are cumulative with other modifications.

4) The statistics of the Avatar, the Devi Intelligence, the Shai-en-Rin, Squid Mothers of the Sheol and Valkyrie are meaningless in human terms. Refer to the individual race descriptions for their characteristics.

5

PART I — ALIEN RACES

AVATAR

Vast clouds of ionized plasma, the Avatar evolved in interstellar space around the time that the Milky Way galaxy was being formed. The ancestors of the Avatar were unusually complex clouds of interstellar molecules bound together by gravity and electromagnetic forces — living creatures capable of feeding and reproduction, part of the galaxy's strange vacuum ecosystem.

A few billion years ago the ancestral Avatar developed the ability to sense radio waves and to manipulate their own radio emissions, perhaps to detect other spacefaring predators or prey. They listened to the symphony of radio stars, the quick tempo of the pulsars and the background music of interstellar hydrogen.

Stimulated by their expanded perceptions, their intelligence grew rapidly. Increasing pressure from competing space-dwelling species like the Voidsharks and Plasma Angels led to cooperation between individuals, the development of a radio-based language to facilitate that cooperation, and ultimately, to a form of nomadic culture.

2.1
APPEARANCE AND PHYSIOLOGY

An Avatar appears to be a 4-5 kilometer-wide lens of softly glowing hydrogen gas, rotating slowly. Sensor scans will detect fluctuating magnetic fields operating within the gas cloud, binding its molecules together. They are diffuse creatures: despite their size, they have fewer atoms in their bodies than a human being.

Avatars are gaseous, and cannot normally manipulate solid objects — they may not touch or be touched. A human who stands within an Avatar's field will experience electrostatic effects: he may draw sparks from touching metal, his hair will stand on end, and so on.

Avatar propel themselves by capturing and compressing interstellar hydrogen, ionizing it, and expelling it for thrust. They cruise at a few percent of light speed. They steer by switching their magnetic polarity, changing directing through interaction with the galaxy's background magnetic field.

Avatars can sense both radio waves and magnetic fields, but have none of the human "five senses." Humans (or any other organic beings lacking a strong natural magnetic field) are nearly invisible to them. Avatar will sense the presence of humans by their equipment: any device using electricity will be detected, as will anything made of ferrous metals. Avatar also unconsciously broadcast radio waves, even when in a dormant state. In some individuals, these broadcasts are unusually powerful — the Avatar equivalent of *snoring* can jam all human communicators within a 100 kilometer radius.

Although the Avatar "nervous system" is in some ways less efficient then a humans, Avatars can still think up to a hundred times faster, because the impulses in their brains can travel at the speed of light. They are effectively living computers. They live for hundreds of thousands of years, growing slowly for about two thousand Earth years, and then reproduce.

Avatar reproduce by fission, splitting into two beings. This process is traumatic, and sometimes fatal. A fissioning Avatar is effectively incapacitated, helpless to defend itself, move or take any other action for the duration of the process, which can take about a week. The psychic shock of fission wipes most of the Avatar's memories; in essence, it dies, and is reborn as two new individuals.

FAVORED ECOSYSTEM

The natural environment of the Avatar is the vacuum of space. The Avatar prefer to stay far away from stars and planets, but near enough to a solar system that they remain within the Oort cloud, the outer shell of comets and other debris orbiting beyond the farthest planets. Avatar who live in interstellar space prefer to dwell within hydrogen-rich regions, such as "bright" or emitting nebulae.

Avatar will not normally enter planetary or stellar gravity wells. Even one percent of Earth's gravity is dangerous to them, and the magnetic field of a planet or star can disrupt their internal field-balances. But in recent millennia the Avatar have learned to compress their bodies down to a more manageable size, the better to interact with the tiny carbon- based life forms whose activities they have begun to notice. Avatar can shrink into a tight ball of plasma which is strong enough to hold together against gravitic stress.

To do this, the Avatar must reduce its size down to 5 to 25 meters in diameter, although it can only maintain this state for about forty-eight hours before becoming fatigued and returning to a more diffuse form, or dying if they remain within reach of a planet's gravitic or magnetic field.

The smaller they get, the more intense their magnetic fields become. A compressed Avatar on a planet can levitate by riding magnetic lines of force, flying at human walking speed. When an Avatar "condenses" down to ten or fewer meters across, it gains the ability to manipulate objects that are either made of ferrous metal or magnetically charged. The objects must be within the area covered by the Avatar's body. Due to the concentration required to focus its own magnetic fields, the Avatar can only manipulate one or two objects at once. An Avatar's dexterity with magnetically manipulated objects is roughly equivalent to a human pair of hands.

DIET

The Avatar derive most of their nourishment by enveloping and devouring other space-going creatures. The favoured prey of the Avatar are the starbeasts humans call Hydrogen Snakes (see *Technology and Trade*, below). One snake per Avatar is a typical meal.

2.2
LANGUAGE

Avatar communicate via radio waves. Since their thought processes are also electromagnetic, this means that Avatar-to-Avatar conversations are supernaturally swift.

Their language is a simple binary radio code, but a specially programmed computer must still be used to interpret it. Because of the speed of conversation, human interpreter programs always print out a synopsis of what the Avatar is saying, rather than trying to keep a running translation going. Only an Artificial Intelligence is fast enough to keep a real-time conversation going with an Avatar!

Due to the wide interstellar dispersal of the Avatar species, several different language groups exist. A computer programmed to understand one group of Avatars may have trouble with the next, at least until it had gathered enough information to write a new language program.

NAMES

Avatar have no names as such, merely biographies of what they are. When dealing with humans, they (with some grumbling) employ shorthand, descriptive terms that may be translated into human concepts, (e.g., Listener to Bright Emitting Hydrogen Line, or Expert Herder of Plasma Whales).

2.3
PSYCHOLOGY

The Avatar think and communicate far faster than humans. An debate that would take days for humans to resolve can last seconds. Important decisions which a human being would agonize over for hours are made instantly. Their computer-swift thought processes mean that Avatars can be capable of almost prescient feats of reasoning. GMs should rely on their own "behind the scenes" knowledge to make sure that Avatar predictions generally come true. Any Avatar talking to a human is doing so with only a small fraction of its awareness. The remainder is occupied with other tasks of greater interest, such as plotting (thousands of years in advance) the migratory patterns of starbeasts, or studying the synergistic effects of supernova on the hydrogen ecology of the entire galaxy. Unfortunately for people who wish to use the Avatar as sentient supercomputers to crack the stock market or solve the secret of time travel, the race couldn't care less about human civilization, and find most aspects of it terribly irrelevant.

In general, the Avatar are too alien to humanity for a clear understanding of their psychology. Avatar do not experience anything directly akin to human emotions, probably because they lack the glandular basis for such feelings. For instance, while they can feel physical pain (once described by an Avatar as an unpleasant sense of dislocation), they lack the many human drives and emotions associated with mating and the protection of children, which are alien to their existence.

Partially substituting for this is a strong impulse toward self-preservation. Moderate curiosity is considered a survival trait: Avatar believe anything strange could be a potential threat, but staying away from it won't make it go away.

Avatar cooperate, on the old principle that many are safer than one — as long as this cooperation is profitable. In a life-threatening situation, Avatar will work together, but once the danger is coldly and intellectually perceived as too great, it's "every alien for itself." But since they do not experience the reaction of "fear," Avatars will not panic unreasonably!

Nevertheless, Avatars are social creatures. They seem to enjoy conversation and sharing ideas, although they do have a tendency to see every interaction in terms of their own personal benefit. This means that an Avatar conversation is an exchange of information on (theoretically) even terms. To outsiders, even a casual chat comes across like a bargaining session between the financial computers of two rival corporations, with the Avatars cautiously trading information for information, bit by bit, and revealing nothing that does not suit its own advantage.

Avatars do have an aesthetic sense: Avatar have been known to express admiration for the beauty of celestial objects, although since they sense radio signals rather than visual light, they perceive a very different starscape than that which humans see. Other then admiring cosmic sights, Avatars art includes electromagnetic equivalents of symphonies, far too sophisticated for humans to understand without computer assistance. They are also philosophers whose perspectives are only understandable by the most brilliant of human cosmologists. One thing they enjoy doing which humans can appreciate is the art form they call "strange lies" which corresponds to the human practice of telling tall tales. While Avatar have sometimes agreed to share their insights with human astronomers and cosmologists, this habit tends to make Avatar theories rather suspect.

2.4
SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The Avatar ability to communicate back and forth at the speed of light and reach near-instant decisions on matters of group interest can make a group of Avatar seem very much like a collective mind. In fact, Avatar are as much distinct individuals as human beings.

The Avatar are a nomadic culture, herding and hunting other vacuum dwellers. Their basic social unit is often translated as the *squadron*. Squadrons are descended from a small group of common ancestors, perhaps even a single being. Each squadron consists of twenty to fifty Avatar who pool their efforts to form a nomadic community for the common good. The squadron cares for newly-fissioned Avatar. When an Avatar fissions, it splits into two individuals who are fully developed, but which lack memory and skills. These individuals are known as *new minds*. In most squadrons, an apprenticeship system has evolved, where the new minds serve wealthy Avatar as herders and hunters for a few centuries, in return for instruction and protection.

Because a given sector of space can only support so many Avatar and starbeasts, squadrons usually split into two groups when they reach more than fifty individuals, each going their own way.

RELIGION AND MYSTICISM

Although Avatars possess fairly accurate theories about the evolution of galaxies, stars and planets, they have many legends about the possibilities of an ultimate creator being or beings.

One popular myth holds that solid bodies such as planets and moons store the souls of Avatars who died without fissioning, while the memories of those who fissioned go to the living, radio-emitting stars and gas giants.

Because the Avatars are so widely dispersed through space, many squadrons have never made contact with other alien races. Their legends tell of meetings with strange creatures are made of matter rather than energy, yet are much denser than ice, broadcast varying frequencies of electromagnetic radiation, and move rapidly. Sometimes they vanish into nothingness! A few times, they have emitted powerful bursts of energy that have disrupted or destroyed starbeasts and even Avatar. Many Avatar dismiss such stories, but others believe that they are evidence that proves that supernatural beings exist; perhaps messengers of the creator, or even the creator itself!

As the above passage hints, Avatars who encounter spaceships may consider them to be angels or gods. With cunning, humans or other aliens could use these beliefs to manipulate the Avatar. But given radio transmissions to monitor, and time to study the ship's occupants, it is very likely the Avatar's computer-like minds would soon guess the truth: that starships are artifacts (although they may first believe them to be domesticated beings) controlled by their smaller inhabitants, who are mortal beings like themselves.

2.5
POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Avatars do not believe in vesting supreme power in a single individual. Squadrons allocate responsibility among several leaders, each with its own sphere. Thus the Thought-Leader will set long-term strategy, the Raidmaster will lead in combat, the Charter of Hydrogen Streams will preside over the plotting of the latest migration route, the Law-Giver will arbitrate disputes within the squadron, the Spokesmaster will conduct diplomatic negotiations with other squadrons, and so on.

The details of political systems vary between squadrons, but Avatar leaders are usually elected after much debate, with everyone able to vote. The greatest influence is exerted by the wealthiest Avatar, who control tens of starbeasts and many new mind underlings whose votes they can "buy" or manipulate.

Lacking human concepts of morality, Avatar politics tend to be a cautious dance that can end in sudden coups or reversals, and occasionally turn into violence with losers being exiled, stripped of their starbeast herds or forced into involuntary fission. Internal struggles over policy are common within squadrons, though less so with trusted leaders. The right to take a new mind under instruction is often fiercely contested: not only are the underlings a valuable asset, but custom grants the starbeasts of the original "parent" to whoever becomes the new minds' master.

The universe is vast, but Avatar travel speeds are slow. Every so often, two Avatar squadrons will meet by chance in the same region of space. These meetings often result in delicate diplomatic negotiations between each squadron's Spokesmaster. Depending on how the negotiations go, the squadrons may decide to combine into one to hunt Voidsharks, trade starbeasts or to harvest a rich hydrogen stream, or to trade information about migratory patterns or stellar phenomena. Afterwards they may separate, perhaps with some members having switched squadrons. In less fertile zones, conflict may result over grazing rights, leading to skirmishes and raids.

2.6
TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

Avatar have no material technology or artifacts. Instead, they domesticate many strange space-dwelling creatures. The Avatar have learned to herd and breed these starbeasts, and to protect their herds against the depredations of carnivores like the Voidsharks. Many starbeasts have exotic traits, the result of hundreds of millions of years of selective breeding.

STARBEASTS
Some of the starbeasts kept by the Avatar include:
Hydrogen Snakes
Hydrogen Snakes are living ramjets who feed on drifting gas clouds, spreading electromagnetic webs to sift for complex molecules they can metabolize. A herd of Hydrogen Snakes can rapidly (in a few thousand years) deplete a large cloud of hydrogen of the molecules necessary for their subsistence. For this reason, Avatars remain constantly on the move, always seeking fresh grazing areas for their herds. Hydrogen Snake stats are given in the *Vacuum Ecosystem* section.

Guardians

Creatures of the strong nuclear force, Guardians disintegrate anything they touch. The Guardians were bred from captured Voidshark stock as "sheep dogs" by the Avatar. Guardians are smaller and not quite as mindlessly rapacious, but are still highly aggressive. They are relatively rare: not every squadron of Avatars has them. They are also bad tempered, and have been known to turn on their owners or attack passing spaceships, especially if they haven't eaten lately. Use the Voidshark description in the *Vacuum Ecosystem* section, but with 50 less hits, and -20 OB.

Wyrmholes

Wyrmholes seem to be living gravitational anomalies left over from the first few seconds after the Big Bang. They are thousand kilometer-long one-dimensional strings. Under stimulus of focused magnetic fields such as those created by an Avatar, they can bend themselves into a hoop. When they do this, they create a warp in space that acts as a stargate, permitting interstellar travel to any region of space not within a gravity well.

Wyrmholes can be controlled by careful application of magnetic force. To successfully bend a Wyrmhole, the controlling Avatar must make a Hyperspace Navigation skill roll at -30, plus -1 per light year. The exact orientation and diameter of the hole determines the direction and distance of travel. An attempt takes ten minutes. A roll of 100+ indicates successful formation to the desired point. The hole remains open for up to 1D10 minutes, after which the wyrm uncoils itself and must rest for at least 20 earth-years. Since the Wyrmhole does not follow through itself, two-way travel is only possible if the travellers bring another (uncoiled!) Wyrmhole with them. A failed attempt exhausts the Wyrmhole to no purpose — it cannot try again for ten years. A roll of 05 or less is a fumble, and the Wyrmhole collapses in on itself (taking its handler and everything else within 1D10 km with it). No beings who have been trapped in a collapsing Wyrmhole have ever returned, but if player characters are ever caught in one, GMs should be merciful: the party should be alive, but half-way across the galaxy, thrown back in time, or lost in another dimension.

Wyrmholes can accelerate at steady speed of 1 km/sec/sec, and seem to be invulnerable to almost anything. Left to their own devices, they seem content to cruise in straight lines through space, sometimes accelerating or decelerating at random. The creatures are greatly prized by the Avatar, and Wyrmhole Benders possess high status in Avatar society.

WARFARE AND WEAPONRY

Avatars are not warlike, but conflicts between their squadrons do occur. Sometimes a squadron will move into a sector of space that already supports its maximum population of Avatar and starbeasts. Rather than leave, a squadron blessed with many members but too few starbeasts may attempt to raid its rivals. Such actions tend to be hit and run skirmishes, aimed at stealing starbeasts rather than killing or injuring Avatar. Ambushes usually take place in regions of space where natural radio interference will mask the approach of a raiding party — within an emitting nebula, or in the vicinity of a radio star or pulsar, for instance.

If Avatars found themselves in conflict with humans, they are far from helpless. Although an individual Avatar is no match for even a lightly-armed vessel, Avatars can use their ECM abilities to disrupt communications, or to generate false signals to trick or lure a pursuing ship into the midst of a pack of raging Voidsharks. If a fight is unavoidable, several Guardian starbeasts might be able to damage or destroy an enemy ship.

COMMERCE AND CURRENCY

Among the Avatar, material goods do not exist as such, but vacuum dwelling animals — starbeasts — serve as a measure of wealth and comfort. Newly fissioned or poorer Avatars spend much of their time grazing or hunting, while a wealthy Avatar has many starbeasts, and will not need to hunt or graze to supplement its diet. Instead, it will have time for leisure activities, such as physical sports, politics, astronomy, exploration or philosophy. Avatar economics revolve around exchanges of labor and domestic animals.

What about interstellar trade? Avatar have certain things other races may want. This includes astronomical and cosmological information, which the Avatar collect both for scientific purposes and because their computer minds contain superlative mental maps of the galaxy. Courses plotted from charts constructed with the aid of Avatars may give a +5 or +10 bonus on navigation rolls. Avatar squadrons can also offer to rent or sell their starbeasts. While humans would have little use for Hydrogen Snakes, creatures like Wyrmholes and Guardians have obvious applications.

What might Avatar want in return? The trade in scientific data can be two-way, since Avatars lack the instruments to scan the entire electromagnetic spectrum. Avatars may also be curious enough to pay for information about areas of pure science which they know nothing about, like as planetary biology or geology. Finally, an endangered Avatar squadron may wish to hire mercenaries, armed starships for use against either Voidshark packs or rival squadrons.

2.7

ADVENTURE SUGGESTIONS

An eccentric scientist has heard rumors of the Avatar, and is obsessed with finding them. He or she charters the party's starship to carry a research team to a nebula where Avatar sightings have been reported.

The rumors are correct: the nebula is home to a small Avatar squadron. It is a good grazing area, but recently they have been victimized by increasing Voidshark attacks which have taken heavy toll on lives and starbeasts.

This group of Avatar have never encountered carbon-based lifeforms before. When the PCs' ship appears, they will mistake the starship for an angel, sent by the gods in answer to their prayers.

They expect the Angel to aid them in destroying the Voidshark pack that has been preying on them. Will the characters go along with it, or try to convince the aliens that their ship is not a god? Perhaps their efforts to communicate will only convince the Avatar that the puny carbon-based lifeforms inhabiting it have taken an angel captive and somehow enslaved it!

If the party does act like gods, or at least agrees to do the squadron's bidding, they may wish to bargain with the squadron. This is expected by the Avatar: even their gods are rational beings. Fighting the Voidsharks means a fierce battle with ship's weaponry, and maybe even a close range boarding action if some of the creatures break into their ship. But if the characters succeed, the Avatar will reward them with an offering: a Wyrmhole.

But if they get it, how will they use it? A magnetic pulse generator linked to the ship's navigation computer might be able to activate it safely, or maybe they will have to hire an Avatar wyrmbender.

SYSTEM NOTES

The Avatar are not as powerful as the godlike Whir-Kohl, but are nevertheless very formidable individuals. They have a natural AT 20 (-50), and 200 hits, with values of 100 in all statistics. They are only affected by energy weapons and nuclear or antimatter explosives. Projectiles or conventional explosions do not harm them. Being bodiless creatures, they are completely immune to poison or disease. They regenerate at a rate of 10 concussion hits per minute. In space, they can fly as if they had a Maneuver Rating of 2 (20 km/sec/sec). Without using Wyrmholes, they have no translight capability.

However, all Avatars take 1D10 damage *each hour* they spend in a gravity well or a planet's magnetic field, cannot regenerate damage, and die instantly if exposed to more than 0.01 Gs when not in "condensed" form. Their speeds are also restricted, and they can only levitate on planets (or in metal-hulled objects such as spacecraft or space stations) at the same speed that humans can walk,

Avatar do not take damage from critical hits. Instead, any time an Avatar would normally take a critical, it has a chance of catastrophic fissioning. This splits the Avatar into two beings, but the shock erases its memory and renders it completely helpless (effectively comatose) for 2D10 days. The chance of an Avatar fissioning is 5% if it takes an A critical, 10% for a B, 20% for a C, 40% for a D and 80% for an E.

Any Avatar has the innate ability to generate modulated electromagnetic fields to jam scanners and detect and analyze power emanations. The Avatar may function as a living Personal EW Generator, Repair Scanner (power emanations only), and Pocket Computer (*Tech Book*, p. 14-15). Avatar can also direct tight pulses of powerful magnetic energy which can fry computer and robotic brains. Treat this ability as if the Avatar were a Mk.20 molecutronic scrambler (*Tech Book*, p. 15) with a range of up to 500 meters.

Finally, Avatar can project bolts of high temperature plasma, by compressing their bodies and squeezing some of their own ionized plasma out like a person holding their finger under a tap. An Avatar firing plasma bolts seems to rapidly expand and compress. This is dangerous to the Avatar, depleting its own natural energy, and each "shot" causes the firing Avatar 1D10 hits of damage, but has the effect of a Heavy Plasmatic Repeater. Avatar may develop skill in *plasma beam* to use this ability.

Avatar may learn skills in much the same way as humans do. Skills may range from very inexperienced (for *new minds*) to mastery of scores of different abilities for millennia-old adults.

Primary skills usable by Avatar include: Perception, Linguistics, Survival*, Sensor Analysis**, Electronic Warfare**, Hyperspace Astrogation**, N-Space Astro, General Physics, Anthropology (for studying humans), Weapon Skills**.

Avatar may also have the following secondary skills: Animal Healing*, Animal Train*, Athletic Games*, Dance*, Diplomacy, Directed Psion, Interrogation*, Public Speak, Signalling**, Singing*, Star-Gazing, Tracking*.

Note: * *indicates that skill is relevant only to Avatars or their starbeasts.* ** *indicates that skill applies to a natural ability, and is performed without human equipment.*

AVATAR PCs

Avatars are recommended primarily as NPCs. With special permission, a GM running a campaign which involves a lot of space travel may allow a player to have a newly-fissioned new mind as an Avatar PC. Such a "baby" would have all the abilities noted above including 100s in all stats, but would have only 100 hits and the normal skills allowed to a beginning player character.

To balance their advantages, GMs should restrict all skills to the list noted above, and strictly enforce the Avatar's vulnerability to planetary gravity. Also, Avatar cannot use many items of human equipment, may only communicate through special translators, and have difficulty even detecting normal life forms!

3.0

DEVI INTELLIGENCE

Devi is a warm, wet planet, slightly smaller than earth, with a relatively slow rotational period and a dense atmosphere. The world's heavy cloud cover and long nights favored the development on land of fungi-equivalents over chlorophyll-using plant species. Over the eons, fungoids evolved that were similar to animals, including mobile eaters of sedentary fungi and predators who fed on them. Meanwhile, life followed a more conventional path in Devi's oceans. Relatively recently (in evolutionary terms) some sea creatures evolved into amphibians, and crawled onto the land.

The resulting struggle between primitive animal and highly evolved plant life tossed up a mutant fungi predator gifted with psionic powers. With telepathic and telekinetic abilities, these creatures now had the equal of human eyes and hands. Evolution favored those members of the species who learned to use them cooperatively, merging their minds to increase the power and intellect at their disposal. Over millions of years, the ancestors of the Devi Intelligence became a single sentient being, a collective intelligence with vast psionic powers. Although the Devi Intelligence has no technology of its own, its spores may be carried by unwary starships to other worlds — a goal the Devi Intelligence may be deliberately working towards.

3.1 ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■
APPEARANCE AND PHYSIOLOGY

The Devi Intelligence exists in two forms: the *Intellects*, stationary sentient fungi who resemble colonies of giant toadstools, and their mobile carnivorous spores, the *Shiverbats*. Both forms of the Devi Intelligence are plant life analogous to highly sophisticated fungi.

SHIVERBATS

The spores, or Shiverbats, are the juvenile form of the Devi Intelligence. Shiverbats resemble giant eyeless and limbless bats. They are a mottled grey-green in color, and their only facial feature is a large mouth. A new-born Shiverbat is about 0.2 meters long and weighs about 10 kg, but within a few years will reach its full 1.2 meter growth. A Shiverbat's wingspan is twice its length, and the leading edges of their wings bristle with sharp, thorny growths.

Shiverbats are psionic carnivores. They move by telekinetic levitation. They hunt in small packs of 3-6 bats, propelling themselves through the air telekinetically at an average speed of 150 meters per turn, at no cost in psionic power points. They are consummate aerialists, and can accelerate instantly to full speed, stop on a dime, or perform complex aerobatics.

Shiverbats lack any analogue to the human senses of hearing or sight. They have secondary senses of smell and touch, both several times more acute than a human. They also possess an electromagnetic sense that enables them to locate magnetic poles and sense electrical storms. With practice, a Shiverbat can develop its magnetic sense to detect artificial force fields or power sources.

Their name comes from their primary sense, the ability to use their Telekinesis in a sonar-like fashion to scan the area around them. The fleeting caress of their mental fingers are the only warning that a Shiverbat is a-hunting. A Shiverbat's TK-Sense extends out for 50 meters, plus 5 meters multiplied by its level, with no cost in Power Points.

When they detect their prey, the pack will close in and intensify their telekinesis. The victim will be suspended in the air, dangling helplessly while the Shiverbats take turns making attack runs, slicing with their razor sharp wing edges. The Devi equivalents of rodents are a Shiverbat's usual prey, but a large enough pack can combine their power to lift a man — add one to their effective Level for each Shiverbat concentrating on the same victim.

Shiverbats grow throughout their lives, gradually becoming slower but more psionically powerful. About one in four Shiverbats survive local predators, accidents, or microorganisms to reach a "pre-adult" stage. After fifteen years, a Shiverbat will be 1.5 meters across and weigh 70 kilograms — ready to begin the metamorphosis into adulthood. It will begin making a nest, a pile of compost or carrion. It will then burrow into the ground and roll itself into a ball, entering a hibernation trance in which all its stored energy is used to power its metamorphosis. During this time, other Shiverbats will keep intermittent watch over it, to protect it from burrowing scavengers and predators.

After about two months in hibernation, the Shiverbat will emerge from the ground as an adult Intellect, the mature form of the Devi Intelligence.

INTELLECTS

The Intellects are mottled grey-green toadstools, standing one to three meters tall. They are covered with transparent bumps — growing Shiverbats — and small circular orifices. These orifices are feeding maws: every so often, an unwary creature (usually no larger than a rat) is casually grabbed by the Intellect's telekinesis and propelled inside.

As with the Shiverbats, the Intellect's primary means of receiving sensory impressions are telekinetic in nature (with a range of 200 meters). Like the Shiverbats they also have secondary olfactory, tactile and electromagnetic senses.

The physical form of an Intellect lives for about ninety earth years. As a communal mind, the Devi Intelligence itself is effectively immortal. Several times during its life, an adult Intellect will begin growing spores — the Shiverbats. Usually four or five Shiverbats begin to develop in "pockets" near the surface of the Intellect, appearing as bulging tumors. After three years of growth, the thin membrane covering the pocket will break (without harming the Intellect), and out will burst a fully-formed new-born Shiverbat.

The most notable ability of the Intellects is their great psionic power, detailed in full under *System Notes*, below. Their telepathic and telekinetic abilities evolved to protect them against other predators by generating psychic illusions and mindblasts, and enable them to communicate with the wide-ranging Shiverbats.

Some of the more subtle psions described below, such as Thought Into Pain, did not initially form part of their psychic arsenal. Instead,

they were developed by the Intellects to deal with alien visitors. If the player-characters are the first individuals to contact the Devi Intelligence, the fungi will not yet have developed powers that could only be useful versus other intelligent races.

Among the Intellect's most impressive abilities are substantial electro-kinetic powers — Mind into Energy, as it were. These can protect the Intellects against energy weapons, but their existence puzzled the first humans to visit Devi, since there would seem to be little reason for fungi to have worked to develop a natural defense against blasters! Some scientists have theorized they evolved to counter marine amphibians who possessed a natural electrical attack; others believe they were developed to control or protect against the violent electrical storms that ravage the planet's surface.

Diet

The Shiverbats eat various mobile fungoid lifeforms, the most common of which are small hopping creatures resembling blind two-legged rabbits. However, Shiverbats are compatible with most Terrestrial proteins, and can eat just about anything. They would have no trouble living off typical ship's rations, for instance.

The Intellects exist off rotting vegetable matter and the occasional pseudo-insect snagged by their TK.

Favoured Ecosystem

With the exception of its polar latitudes, Devi's climate is a humid tropical hothouse. It is a macabre, pastel world without the bright greens of Earth-like biospheres, covered with vast low-lying forests of giant fungi. Rainfall is light to moderate during much of the year, but rains are often accompanied by thunderstorms. Hurricanes are common near the coasts, and there are terrible seasonal lightning storms whose gigavolt rage staggers the imagination. Devi's weather is violent enough to damage aircraft or shuttles, and should not be taken lightly.

Although the land ecology is dominated by fungi, there are some other creatures, especially primitive types like insectoids and burrowing invertebrates. The sea is filled with many different creatures, the most advanced being a form of amphibious crustacean vaguely resembling an insane hybrid of crayfish and electric ray.

If taken off-world, the Devi Intelligence can exist in any environment that humans can inhabit, though a moderate to high humidity level and temperature is preferred. The immobile Intellects requires several feet of good soil or compost.

3.2
LANGUAGE

Intellects and Shiverbats communicate strictly by Telepathy. Shiverbats are usually not good telepaths, but with effort can send basic messages to humans. Fungi are master telepaths, and can even communicate with personnel on ships several light seconds away from the planet.

Shiverbats communicate with whatever Telepathy psions they have developed (typically *Telepath*). Intellects will use *Lord Telepath*, or *Far Telepath True* if talking to ships in orbit.

Names

Shiverbats have no names — they know who they are. In telepathic contact, they refer to themselves as "this seed" and the Devi Intelligence as "we." If travelling among humans or aliens, they may allow their companions to choose names for them.

Intellects have little in the way of identity. They refer to themselves as "we" or, more formally, as "this Intelligence."

3.3
PSYCHOLOGY

When sleeping, the Shiverbats share their mind with the Intellect that spawned them, experiencing — in a second hand, dream like fashion — the vastness of the collective Intelligence itself. During the day, they are independent entities under their own volition. Their intellectual capacity is uncertain, but seems to be about that of a young (10-12 year old) human child.

Much of a Shiverbat's time is spent satisfying its appetite. When not hunting they are inquisitive and playful, often engaging in aerobatic chases (or dances) and games of telekinetic tag. They have been observed to be fascinated by other creatures (when they aren't eating them) and will often catch a fish or mobile fungi to "play with" rather than eat. They are intensely curious, and will often experiment with strange and interesting things regardless of the potential danger.

Shiverbats appear to have little "affection" for other Shiverbats or Intellects in the human sense. They do possess a strong cooperative survival instinct which causes them to form larger social bonds and which can lead one Shiverbat to risk itself to help another.

All Shiverbats carry the potential race memory of their entire species. Once a Shiverbat reaches adulthood and turns into an Intellect, it merges into the group mind of all Intellects, the Devi Intelligence.

No one, except possibly another group mind, understands the inner thoughts of the Devi Intelligence. Telepaths who have contacted it have come away with an impression of a vast, coldly logical sentience awash in a deep well of endless memory, the whole throbbing with a driving need to survive and to reproduce.

The best analogy for the Devi Intelligence is a giant organic computer with each Intellect functioning as a combination sensor and manipulator. All of the Intellects exist as the same entity, thinking the same thoughts. Everything experienced by the race, down to the dim morass of its pre-sentient period eons in the past, is retained in Intelligence's collective memory.

It *is* apparent that the Devi Intelligence is totally ruthless. Since any single Intellect shares memory and consciousness with all other Intellects within range, threats against a single fungus have little effect. Only a threat to a sizable number of Intellects or the planet itself will bother it.

The Devi Intelligence fears the technology in the hands of more advanced races. Nuclear weapons, or worse, biochemical agents designed to kill fungi, could totally annihilate it. As long as it remains on one planet, it faces possible extinction, if not from humanity than from other races. Safety requires that it expand throughout the cosmos. To do this, it needs off-worlders with starships to carry its spores, the Shiverbats, to other planets.

Most scientists believe the Devi Intelligence's primary goal is to survive and expand. However, this may be simple minded. Who knows what the Intelligence is thinking?

3.4
SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The basic social organization of the Shiverbats is a "pack" consisting of 3-8 Shiverbats spawned by the same Intellect. Shiverbats appear to have no form of social status, and since they lack genders and are born fully able to care for themselves, every Shiverbat is equal.

Within the pack, Shiverbats are highly cooperative. They communicate among themselves via telepathy, play together, work together when hunting or to defend themselves, and act to rescue each other from danger.

Shiverbats of other packs do not hunt or play together, but neither do they compete, restricting their hunts to defined territories. Every so often, members of different packs (recognizable to a Shiverbat by subtle chemical cues similar to pheromones) will mate to exchange genetic material, a process they find pleasurable. However, an "exchange" is not necessary for reproduction, and does not result in progeny.

3.5
POLITICAL STRUCTURE

As a collective mind, the Intellects have no political or social hierarchy among themselves. But if the Intellects spread to other planets they would be outside of the reach of their brethren's telepathy, (which has a maximum range of ten light seconds) and would therefore no longer be part of the group consciousness. Although they would still retain all racial memories, they would no longer share real-time experiences. As such, a extraterrestrial branch of the Intelligence may gradually drift culturally and mentally apart from the prime colony on Devi, eventually becoming a separate being.

To counter this, it is possible that any off-world colony would use Shiverbats as messengers to maintain cohesion between separate colonies of the Intelligences. This can work because each newly-budded Shiverbat contains the complete genetically encoded memory of the Intellect (and hence the Intelligence) that spawned it. By periodically exchanging Shiverbats, who will then grow into Intellects and merge their memories with the local Intelligence, a form of interstellar rapport could be maintained.

INTERSTELLAR RELATIONS

The Devi Intelligence may be perceived as a valued trade partner, a potential menace, or perhaps even kept secret by the authorities or its discovers, in which case, adventurers may stumble upon the planet by accident.

As a weird mass-mind with strange psionic powers, the Intelligence will not be trusted by either the public or the Imperial government! It is quite possible that Devi will be declared off-limits to interstellar trade, to prevent the spores spreading to other planets. While the Intelligence could not win a war against a starfaring society, it could easily infest an under-developed colony world that lacked access to heavy weapons. In fact, such a struggle might make an interesting scenario.

3.6
TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

The Devi Intelligence is non-technological, but it can quickly learn to understand (and fear!) human technology. But rather than learn to use human devices, the Devi Intelligence prefer to refine their own psychic abilities, either by finding new uses for existing powers, or by devising entirely new psions.

Shiverbats have more interest in technology. A Shiverbat travelling with humans could be taught (or discover on its own) how to use its telekinetic abilities to press buttons, open doors, and perform other simple tasks.

On their own, the Shiverbats do not make tools, but they sometimes use their TK to create abstract patterns in sand, pebbles, bones or driftwood. Much of their "art" can only be perceived by someone with TK or sonar: it is designed to feel good when signals are bounced off it.

COMMERCE

Devi has no technology to trade, and the Intelligence does not wish to risk ecological damage by allowing the homeworld's resources to be exploited. Nevertheless, the Intelligence wants something off-worlders can provide: transport to other planets and territory to colonize, or money to buy that territory.

So what can the Devi Intelligence trade for what it seems to want?

One answer is labour. If suitably planted (perhaps in a hydroponics deck) and provided with food and fertilizer, an adult Intellect can actually serve as a useful crewman on a starship.

It can use its Mind into Energy psions (especially Power Routing and Power Enhancing) to recharge power cells or enhance the power output of ship or vehicle engines. With a complement of Shiverbats to act as its hands and feet, it can even provide security or scouting functions on a military or exploration ship.

WARFARE AND WEAPONRY

In battle, Shiverbats and Intellects will use their psychic powers, both to directly attack enemies, and to coordinate their own operations. In addition, Shiverbats can attack by flying at targets at high speed, using their razor-sharp wing-edges to rip into their opponents as they move by them.

Shiverbats are vulnerable to advanced weapons, though their high speed enables them to dodge many attacks. All adult Intellects possess telekinetic powers capable of shorting out electrical devices and absorbing or even reversing attacks from energy weapons.

3.7
HOMEWORLD

Since the Shiverbats are not technological, Devi exists in an undeveloped state — there are no "cities" or "houses." But the ecology is "managed" in one sense: Shiverbats actively herd or hunt predators that might menace the immobile Intellects, while carefully avoiding over-hunting their own prey. Similarly, the Intellect population is deliberately spread out to insure optimum hunting territories for the Shiverbats they spawn. Since the Intellects can communicate with each other within a range of 300,000 km without effort, they see no reason to cluster close together.

At present, the population of 2.4 million Intellects and about four times that number of Shiverbats has been deemed optimum for Devi. Only enough Shiverbats are budded to replace losses due to attrition and old age. But if the Intelligence were to establish a colony on another world, the colony could easily double its population every decade.

3.8
ADVENTURE SUGGESTIONS

Being the first characters to discover the Devi Intelligence makes an interesting first-contact scenario. Explorers arrive on Devi to do an initial survey, perhaps finding the planet rich in useful minerals. The party won't notice the Intellects at first — after all, they are just one strange toadstool among many weird fungi. Similarly, the Shiverbats will appear as just another dangerous form of carnivorous plant-life, although if the characters observe their playful behavior, they may suspect them of being as smart as monkeys or dolphins.

The Devi Intelligence won't pay much attention to the characters, either. While its perceptions can reach into space, it had no reason to look into the sky and won't have noticed their ship landing.

But sooner or later (sooner if the characters make use of advanced weapons or flying vehicles) it will receive reports from the Shiverbats about this new, strange addition to the Devi ecology. Looking back into its evolution for a possible source of strange new lifeforms, its long racial memory will assume the party to be sea creatures, some new form of amphibious life arisen from the alien depths, and it may direct Shiverbats to investigate.

Explorers will probably have food and weapons snatched by curious Shiverbats; the scouting party may be impressed by their curiosity and abilities, but may still doubt they have any intelligence, unless they are able to make contact with them through psi powers. But if nothing happens, eventually a flock of a dozen may fly up and snatch one of the player characters via telekinesis to bring into the presence of one of the Intellects. The Devi Intelligence will use their telepathy to contact the captive, and if no violence breaks out, the PCs will have discovered a new alien race!

3.9
SYSTEM NOTES

With the GM's permission, a player may have a young Shiverbat as a PC. The character may have been accidentally picked up by an exploration team or freighter, or is perhaps deliberately "working passage" with a group in return for food and the promise that when it grows up it will be allowed to "plant" itself as an Intellect to start a new Devi Intelligence colony on a suitable world.

Shiverbats are always Semi-Telepath/Explorers or Armsmen with Alteration as their Base Field. Shiverbat characters are designed just like human ones, except they get no Background Options. Instead they automatically (at no cost) gain the first 5 levels of the Alteration/Telekinetics and Alteration/Telepathy list.

If a Shiverbat attacks physically, it can deliver a wing rip, moving by the target at high speed and slashing with its thorny wing edges. This is treated as a Melee Weapon attack, delivering slash criticals with a Mk. 2 threshold and no OB penalties. The shiverbat can also smash into its target instead of slashing: this delivers Crush criticals instead.

They have natural AT of 3: GMs should ignore the special effects of any criticals which impose damage to limbs, eyes, etc., since they have none. They can "bleed" organic juices, and internal organs may be damaged.

Unless they have been in prolonged contact with more advanced races, their bonuses and skills will be limited to those suitable for survival or melee combat. The only skills a Shiverbat PC may start with are:

Weapon Skills (in *Wing Rip* attack), Stalking and Hiding, Perception, Adrenal Defense, Adrenal Moves, Ambush, Body Development, Survival, Electromagnetic Analysis (like Scanner Analysis but using natural Energy Sense), Alien Environments, Psion Lists (any allowed for Intellects, above).

Secondary Skills appropriate for a starting Shiverbat PC or a typical NPC include Acrobatics, Athletic Games, Caving, Directed Psion, Disarming, Diving, Drug Tolerance, Foraging, Frenzy, Meditation, Navigation, Tracking, Trickery, Tumbling, and Weather Watch. Note that many of these skills would be used in different ways by a Shiverbat than by a human. A Shiverbat using Tracking would not look at the ground for foot prints, since it can't see: instead it could sniff for spore and scan undergrowth with its TK sense to find broken branches.

NPC Shiverbats will average about 5th level with about 40 hit points; a Shiverbat above 15th level is a rarity (by that point they will have usually metamorphosed into Intellects). Remember that Shiverbats cannot speak and have no arms or hands. They can only manipulate things through telekinesis and only communicate through telepathy, although they *could* learn to write by moving a pen telekinetically, for instance.

INTELLECTS

Adult Intellects are not suitable for use as player characters. It's easier to treat Intellects as animals rather than as characters, since almost all fungi are the same. Their skills are rarely important.

An Intellect has 150 hits — ignore all critical effects except for extra hits. Its flesh is AT 3. Since it is immobile, it cannot parry attacks (DB 0), instead defending itself with truly formidable psionic powers.

Every Intellect is a 30th level True Telepath with a SD of 100. This gives them 90 power points (but see below for the effects of the mass mind) per day. They have Alteration as their Base Field with Mind Into Energy and Telepathy at 30th level, and Telekinetics, Armor, Concealment and Mind Over Matter at 20th level. In the field of control, Intellects have Mind Assault, Thought Master, Thought into Pain and Illusion at 20th level. In the field of Self-Mastery they have Mind's Defense at 10th level and Mind Discipline at 20th level. If using the optional additional psions (*Space Master*, p. 114) Intellects should only have those from the Mind Over Matter list (Fog and Clouds are recommended). No other psions will be available. Intellects regenerate power points after 8 hours, regardless of action.

The Devi Intelligence's group mind means that the more Intellects are in contact (within 300,000 km) with each other, the more power will be available. The "world mind" acts as a psion multiplier, increasing the inherent power points of all Intellects in range:

Number of Fungi	Psion Multiplier
1	x1
2 to 9	x2
10 to 99	x3
100 to 999	x4
1000 to 9,999	x5
10,000 to 99,999	x6
100,000 to 999,999	x7
1,000,000 to 9,999,999	x8

Devi itself has some 2,400,000 fungi, which gives every adult Fungi on or near the planet eight times its normal power points (720!). The smaller totals are for Intellect colonies encountered off Devi, or on Devi if the population is somehow reduced.

DRAKARANS

The Drak resemble man-sized one-eyed tyrannosaurs covered in beautiful jeweled armor that flashes with all colors of the spectrum. The Drakarans are a starfaring race of warriors and philosophers, uncompromising in their search for truth and justice, yet bound to the ancient, cruel customs necessitated for survival on a brutal homeworld.

4.1
APPEARANCE AND PHYSIOLOGY

Drakarans are carbon-based, oxygen-breathing life forms, with a biochemistry relatively similar to that of humanity.

A typical Drakaran stands 1.5 meters tall and weighs 100 kilograms. They are bipedal, with an upright posture, two strong arms, short, powerful legs and a reptilian tail. Their torsos are muscular, with rainbow scales that shimmer and glitter like a prism.

A Drakaran's head is lizard-like, but with a high forehead and enlarged cranium. The Drakaran's single eye is deeply set in a long armored slit just below its forehead, which serves to protect it from dust. In contrast to the great eye, its ears are mere holes, and its nose is only a slit on the end of a short, flattened snout. The jaw is powerful, the mouth filled with several rows of sharp teeth. Drakaran hands have five fingers and an opposable thumb, each digit tipped with a sharp claw.

The Drak have two sexes. The females are slightly smaller than the males, and possess a marsupial-like pouch. The Drak are oviparous: a female Drak is fertilized by the male, and after about 150 earth-days will lay three to four translucent eggs during a two day period. The eggs are carried in a pouch by the mother until they are ready to hatch, which occurs some 90 days after laying. As the Drak are not mammals, the mother produces no milk. Young were originally fed on blood and food predigested by their parents; these days, commercial formulas are used.

The primary Drakaran senses are vision and smell; a Drak's single eye is equal to a human's for most applications, although long distance depth perception is inferior. Its olfactory sense is far superior to a man's, being designed to sniff out water or blood in the open desert. On the other hand, its hearing, adequate for worlds with dense atmospheres, suffers in lower pressure environments, and is less acute than a human being's.

The average Drak reaches its full growth after 20 earth years, and lives to 80 in a natural environment. Modern medicine usually extends this to 120+ years for those who can afford it.

FAVORED ECOSYSTEM

Drak Ne'vah, the Drakaran homeworld, is a large, hot desert planet with a high gravity and dense atmosphere.

The Drak are most comfortable on worlds with a moderate to heavy gravity, 1.5 Gs being perfect. They breathe a standard oxy-nitrogen mix at 1.3 atmospheres pressure.

The Drak originally evolved in desert lands: the function of their colorful scales is not so much armor as to reflect heat and retain moisture. Drakarans can adapt to a wide range of temperatures, but prefer warm ($\approx 30°$ C) dry conditions that approximate the ancestral steppes and deserts of Drak Ne'vah.

DIET

The Drakaran metabolism is based on left-handed amino acids, like that of most humanoids and all Earth lifeforms, so they can eat the same foods that humans do. They evolved from hunting carnivores, and eat only a small amount of vegetable matter, preferring meat products. Most terrestrial animal protein is compatible with their metabolism.

THE STALKING

Drakarans do not sleep, although they rest for an hour or so after meals or heavy exertion. Instead, every twenty earth-days they must enter "the stalking," a waking dream in which suppressed primal instincts are aroused.

While experiencing "the stalking" Drakarans become hunting animals, pure and simple. They will not remember language, or use tools or technological devices (though if wearing armor, they might not remove it). Their only interest is to hunt down and kill food. A stalking Drakaran will not harm other Drakarans (except possibly enemies or rivals), but any other intelligent beings are fair game!

A "stalking" Drak will only eat food he has personally killed; confinement while in this phase may cause madness or starvation. Groups of Drakarans who enter the Stalking at the same time will cooperate much like pack animals.

The stalking reflex lasts for four to seven earth-days. Before it occurs, a Drak can voluntarily delay the onset of the stalking by up to three days time, but will suffer lapses of concentration (penalty of -20 to all rolls per day until he enters it; once in "the stalking," penalties vanish, but see below.

A Drakaran in the stalking has the following skill adjustments: add +40 to Stalking and Hiding, +20 to Perception, Survival and Ambush (with natural weapons only). All skills involving technology (all technic, scientific, weapon combat, engineering, astronautic, and any general or special skills dealing with weapons, vehicles, tools or language, such as Pick Locks or Sniping) are *forgotten* for the duration. Skills dealing with nature or the body, such as Swimming, Climbing or Adrenal Defense, are retained at normal values.

The cycle of the stalking is a period coinciding with the phase of their homeworld's moon, and simply resulted in all work stopping for a few days every Drakaran month (although robots and computers can continue to handle business). For modern Drak, the stalking reflex makes space travel difficult but not impossible. Drak spacecraft stop periodically on appropriate colony or frontier worlds with plentiful game; Drak passengers on commercial vessels or long voyages often travel in suspended animation. If a suitable planet-stop is not available, larger Drak ships and space stations may release live game (such as the Jarzik, a small fast-breeding lizard resembling a cross between a rat and an iguana) into the corridors of the ship and seal off sensitive areas such as the power room and bridge. Control is transferred to robots or the computer, and the hunt begins.

4.2
LANGUAGE

Like humans, the Drak communicate primarily through verbal speech, supplemented by largely unconscious gestures and body language. Drakaran speech is low and whispering, full of sibilants; when angry, they hiss like a kettle boiling over.

There are twenty-two languages presently spoken on Drak Ne'vah; many more were spoken in the past. No one language is dominant. A typical Drak speaks five or six languages, making it usually possible for two Drak from different regions to find a common tongue; a Drakaran who knew less than three languages would be considered functionally retarded! There are only two significant Drak alphabets; both use single symbols to represent entire words, much like Chinese.

The Drakarans refuse to learn human (or other alien) languages, which they consider graceless and decadent, although they may employ computers or interpreters as translators if in a good mood. Humans they are able to deal with on their terms must learn their own language, or find a good interpreter!

Translation programs for the Drakaran language are available in larger Imperial databanks and on most human worlds in the frontier region near the Drakaran Hegemony.

NAMES

Drakaran names consist of a personal name followed by a family name. Most family names consist of three syllables, ending in a vowel sound. Sample family names include Ikishka, Jisaru, and Annakee. A Drakaran who marries into a family adopts the new family's name. Drak personal names are one or two syllables, taken from colors or odors. Drak travelling among humans will often translate the personal name into the human language, while retaining the family name. Such a Drak might call himself Blue of the Ystari, for instance; another might call herself Scent of Flowers of the Iriska.

Drakarans use few titles, but a member of a family who is part of the Lumog (the aristocratic ruling council, see *Political Structure*, below) usually adds the title Vrai (translated as Lord or Lady) in front of the family name, (e.g., Vrai Blue of the Ystari). A family matriarch, the ruling grandmother, is usually addressed as Ki (Greatmother to humans) *instead* of the personal name, (e.g., Ki Iriska, or Greatmother Iriska).

For an off-worlder to fail to use the proper titles is considered a mark of stupidity and discourtesy, and will not get relations with the Drak off to a good start!

4.3
PSYCHOLOGY

Perhaps because so much of their animal nature is suppressed until the stalking, the Drak are normally a cool, unemotional people. They never get angry, but they also never forgive an offense or insult. They approach problems with ruthless logic, with survival of the family (or, for Drakaran leaders, the race) uppermost in their minds.

A Drak values the survival of its extended family above all things — even his or her own life, or the life of individual friends, mates, or children. A Drak's goal is to improve his or her *family's* position, with personal well-being incidental to this. In a low-status family, its members will attempt to avoid poverty and to gain wealth and land. For high-status families, improvement means seeking political power and influence.

Next to the family, the Drakarans revere truth and order. Simplicity is a virtue. The Drak like things to be clear, neat and tidy. In science, the cold, universal beauty of mathematics and physics is prized over the random diversity of biology and the ambiguities of the social sciences. In politics and in business, the Drak detest no-win situations, half-measures, compromise and bargaining. Drakaran merchants or diplomats will offer clear terms: take it or leave it.

All Drak dislike ambiguity and uncertainty. Drak will never lie about anything; the concept is totally foreign to them. The Drak are so forthright about their opinions that humans consider them unforgivably rude. A few Drakarans are known to shade the truth, lie by omission or deceive by misdirection. The majority of the race considers such deviants to be total miscreants. A Drakaran who deliberately spread an untruth would be considered insane and suffer legal punishment. If a Drakaran wishes to conceal something or keep a secret, he will simply refuse to answer. Drakarans are naturally modest; they dislike flowery speech and consider excessive or undeserved praise or compliments to be almost as rude as a human would an insult.

Drakarans are intensely conservative, and change their views only when confronted with the logical necessity to do so or the obvious falsehood of their opinions.

4.4
SOCIAL STRUCTURE

All Drak live in extended families, consisting of about two dozen individuals, a third of which are married couples, and the rest children. The Drak family is matriarchal, ruled by the eldest grandmother (called the Greatmother), who makes all important decisions. When she is too old to rule, the eldest Drak female who has born children becomes the new matriarch.

With the exception that the head of the family is always female, male and female Drakarans are social equals.

Compared to the family, individuals have little importance in Drakaran society. For example, individuals who commit a crime are not punished, rather the entire family is. Unlike a human adult, who after a time will be expected to leave home and become independent, a Drak always owes obedience to the family matriarch, and the family will always provide for him throughout life.

Families are economic cooperatives. Personal property and wealth is unknown. Someone who leaves the family (except through marriage) forfeits everything. Social standing is based on land ownership, but land, like all other property, is owned by the family, not by individuals. Those families who own no land are a proletarian class at the bottom of the Drakaran social pyramid.

Larger social groups are formed from families related by marriage. Drak families allied by marriage make up larger clans, similar to nations or corporations, which join together to increase their own political and economic power. In essence, Drakaran society is an aristocracy in which the oldest and wealthiest land-owning families control industry and business. Land, wealth and political power are seen as inseparable. A Drakaran family can only achieve upward mobility by getting rich and acquiring land, or by having its members developing sufficient skills or fame that a rich family will want to ally with it through marriage.

Drak Ne'vah is mostly unfertile desert, with less land for raising food than on a more Earth-like planet. Drakarans breed quite rapidly, and this fact, combined with the Drakaran homeworld's unforgiving climate and limited natural resources has forced most Drakaran cultures to adopt ruthless methods to control population and ensure survival-oriented behavior.

Traditional customs exist to cull the weak and unfit, so that they will not be a burden on the family. Children with birth defects are always killed, usually by exposure. Drak who become old or sick enough that they can no longer work for the family are obliged to commit ritual suicide by walking into the nearest wasteland without provisions.

Although the crueler traditional customs have been abandoned as Drakarans have developed technology and space travel, many still remain in force. Drak culture tends to develop traditional ways of doing things. Breaking these traditions is hard: the Drak believe that if something has worked for generations, why fix it?

KARAK-TOR

One test that almost all adult Drak must someday face is Karak-Tor, the Trial of Thirst and Wind, whereby a Drak couple prove their fitness to mate and sire children. All marriages are arranged by the Greatmother to enhance the prestige or wealth of the family, or to add to the family's skill base. After a marriage is arranged between two families, the prospective husband and wife are abandoned together in one of the desert wastelands, with minimal equipment. If they can work together and make their way out of the desert, they are allowed to mate and produce children, since they will have proven both their fitness to survive and their ability to cooperate together in adversity.

ZAROK

Another custom that is still in force is Zarok, the Lifetaking. Every ten years on his or her birthday, an adult Drakaran is expected to murder a single stranger. The killer must wear a sunmask, so as to conceal his identity. The victim may be anyone who is *not* known to the killer. After the deed, the killer must declare the murder as "Zarok" and unmask in the presence of local authorities after committing it. If he does so, he will go unpunished by law. However, Zarok is a solitary ritual with strict rules: anyone aiding the killer *will* be punished, as will an attack on someone who is known to the killer, or a failed attempt which only wounds a victim or which causes injury or death among bystanders, for Zarok is designed to help control population, not lead to battles or feuds. Relatives or friends of the victims of Zarok are expected to see the death as an Act of God rather than a murder, and in any case, will normally have no knowledge of the killer's identity.

Zarok is generally only performed on fellow Drakarans.

RELIGION AND MYSTICISM

All Drakaran forms of worship tend toward unambiguous monotheism, deism, or atheism, with little of the confusing dogma and ritual that characterizes human religion.

The major Drak religion is an uncompromising monotheistic faith known as Imak. Most of the traits characteristic of Drakarans, such as cool logic and the importance of the family, are taught to be virtuous. Imak is also the source of many of the prohibitions against overpopulation and harsh tests of fitness that still exist in Drakaran society. Drak tend to worship by simple prayer and meditation. The religion lacks a formal hierarchy: community elders and Greatmothers serve as teachers and ministers as needed.

Imak is followed by two-thirds of the Drakaran population. The other Drakaran religions are similar in basic character if not in detail.

4.5
POLITICAL STRUCTURE

For the last several centuries, Drak Ne'vah has been ruled by a coalition of several clans, the Vhadrakis-Oon, or Greater Families. Within the Vhadrakis-Oon, voting rights in the Lumog, or Council of Grandmothers, is reserved to those matriarchs whose families have at least one Ikashi — about 2,000,000 Elmonits worth — in land and income. The Lumog meets regularly to direct Drakaran society and vote on major issues, and set taxation rates (for families, not individuals) and interstellar policy. Politics in the Lumog usually split along family and clan lines.

LAW AND JUSTICE

Drakaran justice tends to be slow but uncompromising. Drak laws are primarily aimed at maintaining civil order, and preventing assault, wanton murder, or theft. Judges (known as Truth Seekers) are holders of honored political positions elected from the Council of Grandmothers, and are assigned to a roving circuit to prevent bias. Trials are controlled by a pair of Ystarok, who make the sole determination of guilt and sentence.

The goal of Drak justice is to find the truth behind the situation. There is no distinction between a trial and a criminal investigation: a trial starts as soon as a crime is reported to the police, with the Truth-Seekers controlling the investigating officers. There is no set legal code and few laws on what kind of evidence may be used, but precedents are recorded and referred to. Drakaran law requires citizens to act for the public good of other Drakarans, and a witness can be charged for not helping prevent a crime or failing to report it.

Since lying is unthinkable in Drakaran society and lawyers and plea bargaining are unknown, trials are short once all the suspects and witnesses have been located, and the best defense for a guilty individual is to run!

If someone is found to be at fault, their family will be required to pay restitution appropriate to the crime. When someone is injured, the guilty party will have to provide damages to the injured party's family as well as damages to the state for the cost of the trial and investigation. If a person cannot raise the money, he will be enslaved to the victim or the government until his debt is paid off, or killed if no one wants him. A wanton murderer may have to pay off the estimated life earnings of the victim.

THE STAR LEGIONS

It's a dangerous galaxy, and the Lumog recognize a logical need for force to back up their politics. The Drakaran military is organized into Star Legions, which are mixed ground and space battlegroups.

Regardless of wealth, each family is responsible for sending one of its sons or daughters to serve a ten year term in the Star Legions. Promotion in the Star Legions are by merit, but those of richer families are more likely to obtain high positions, and most generals and admirals tend to come from families with representatives in the Lumog. However, the Star Legions do serve a valuable "levelling" function in Drakaran society, since a poor Drak who rises to high rank can use the pay and status to raise his or her family's income.

The Star Legions of the Drak are equivalent in size to two Imperial Starmadas, plus a million ground troops, of which about fifty thousand are elite units equipped as interstellar marines for operations in alien environments or in vacuum.

The Star Legions have a large stock of holocaustic weapons, including fusion and antimatter bombs. Imperial strategists who understand the Drak mentality are not at all certain that the Drak would abide by Imperial protocols on use of such weapons in an all-out war, especially in situations where the Drak were facing smaller powers without the ability to retaliate in kind.

INTERSTELLAR RELATIONS

The Drak control an area of space about one hundredth the size of the Imperium, roughly equivalent to that of a Major House like Devon or Jade-London. They exist in the area of space known as the Backnet, and are not close neighbors to the Imperium, but have had some contact with Imperial traders, especially members of the far-ranging League of Merchants. Some human merchants have found the Drakarans to be hard to deal with, and overly arrogant, but the chance to purchase the elegant and rugged Drak technology is often worth the price.

The drive to find new land to colonize has led the Drakarans to adopt an expansionist interstellar policy. In any newly discovered sector, Drak scout ships and scientific expeditions are soon followed by families of land-hungry colonists, some officially sponsored by the Lumog, others as private ventures by related families. A few Drak families have even emigrated into Imperial space and, with Imperial permission, have become citizens of Minor Houses within the frontier zones, usually as settlers on under-populated desert or steppe planets.

The Drakarans have also attempted to seize a few human and alien frontier planets in the Imperial Backnet. This has led the Drak into wars of aggression on their borders; the Drak's "no compromise" style of fighting has led to crushing victories in some instances, and the total abandonment of colonies in others where they have been outmatched.

The only wars fought by the Drak have been against alien races and human Renegade Houses, not with the Imperium or its allies. The Imperium regards the Drak as a serious potential threat, but also a useful ally against implacably hostile races such as the Snee (see *Space Master*), Tezcat or Valkyrie.

4.6
TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

The Drak prefer simple devices that are easy to maintain. This does not mean they are anti-technological. In principal, a laser or a fusion bomb is in many ways "simpler" in physics then a cannon, and a rocket is less complex than the mechanical nightmare of an internal combustion engine! Drakaran science is often driven by the need to find "simple" answers to riddles of the cosmos. For instance, Drak physicists enjoy searching for things like grand unified field theories. In their search for these universal truths, Drakarans soon mastered gravity. Drak gravity-control devices are among the best available, and are highly sought after by other races.

Although not technological leaders, the Drakarans are just as advanced as most Imperial worlds in the fields of chemistry, metallurgy, and physics, and some of the best theoretical mathematicians and physicists have been Drakaran.

In contrast to the "physical sciences," Drakaran biology or social science is not as well developed. The Drak mind set has little patience for either field. Similarly, the race's ruthless attitude toward the sick and unfit has not spurred the development of sophisticated biochemical or medical science. Medicine has also suffered because the hardy Drakarans are less likely to get ill. The result of this is that Drakaran medical and biological technologies are not very advanced, while cloning and alterant replication is totally beyond them.

Drakaran weapons and devices are well made, requiring little maintenance. The best Drakaran technology has a smooth elegance to it. Weapons will have only half the normal chance of malfunction, but are conservative, functional designs which lack frills or accessories. Drakaran devices are built to perform a single function very well — they detest complex multipurpose gadgets like powered armor or general-purpose robots.

COMMERCE AND CURRENCY

Drakarans engage in a full spectrum of trade with neighboring races.

Although their austere habits limit their production or purchase of luxuries, they export industrial products of all sorts, especially scientific instruments, and gravitic technology. They import foodstuffs, some forms of equipment (e.g., advanced surgical tools), and any human gadgets or inventions that the Drak haven't thought of.

The Drak utilize electronic credit systems similar to the Imperial Elmonit. No Drakaran will go anywhere without his or her small, triangular credit medallion.

WEAPONRY

In battle, Drakarans favour blasters, rocket launchers, and heavy exoskeletal body armor, often with metal claws attached to the gauntlets. The Drak have little use for stun weapons; if they fight, they prefer a more final solution.

Some Drak adventurers may be found using archaic weapons when hunting game; also, there may be a few regressed "lost colonies" of Drakarans scattered about. Traditional weapons used for hunting included morning stars, throwing spears and lances, which were often wielded from a mount; even today, Drak explorers and hunters often ride and fight from large two-legged riding lizards.

SPACECRAFT

The Drakarans prefer large spaceships, with room to stage improvised "vermin hunts" in the corridors. Drakaran vessels are of a simple, rugged design. Even civilian vessels are usually quite well armed. Drak prefer a brute force approach to designing military craft, emphasizing heavy weapons and powerful screens over speed or stealth. Their favorite armament consists of missile launchers and heavy lasers.

4.7
HOMEWORLD

Drak Ne'vah is the Drakaran homeworld: the name means "Mother of the Race." 19,000 km in diameter, it is a warm, dry world, with a low humidity. The atmosphere is somewhat denser then Earth's (1.3 atmospheres), and the gravity is 1.5 Gs. About fifty percent of the world is water, with most of the land area in a single super-continent surrounded by several island chains. The predominant terrain is prairie, steppe and desert, with sparse northern and southern forest lands. Dustdevils and sandstorms are quite common, especially around the equator.

The equatorial region, previously uninhabitable for much of the Drakarans history, has been partially terra-formed in recent decades to make the climate more suited for herding. Extensive canal networks and weather control satellites have turned a burning dustbowl into fertile (though arid) prairie. Even so, constant ecological management is necessary to prevent the land from reverting to desert, and many areas of uninhabited wasteland still exist.

The Drakaran population is low by human standards, but is high for a race of carnivores. The total Drakaran population is 860,000,000 on the race's homeworld. There are three billion Drakarans living on other worlds, although individual colony planets rarely have a population above 300 million.

Drak Ne'vah has a single moon, Biranon ("the Hunter"). The moon is an unusual reddish color, and has a thin, unbreathable atmosphere. It is lightly populated, with only a few scientific and mining stations, but because its phases correspond to the onset of the Stalking, it has major religious and mystical significance, and figures prominently in Drakaran art.

HOUSING AND CITIES

Traditional family dwellings consist of several rooms spaced around a large open courtyard containing a pool; the entire extended family lives under one roof. Drakarans prefer to build low to the ground, but in recent centuries rising land prices have led to more high rise construction, including apartment complexes for poorer families. The Drak dislike underground buildings, and except for storage areas, few exist. Drakaran construction tends to be blockish and solid, using stone, brick, metal and concrete in preference to wood. Rooms are large and spacious even in "poor" dwellings, since Drak have less need for privacy then humans, and would rather have one large room for an entire family then several smaller ones.

Drakaran cities and towns are laid out in geometric patterns, a function of the race's obsession with order and harmony. Similarly, with one exception, the cities and even the slums are obsessively neat and tidy, with a large budget devoted to waste disposal or cleaning robots. The exception (from a human perspective) is that they have a deliberately large, though carefully controlled, population of wild rodents. These are reptilian creatures analogous to squirrels or rats, but often the size of dogs or cats. The rodents eat garbage and provide prey for city dwellers during "the stalking." Few are dangerous, but walking down a back street and coming face to face with a pack of dog-sized lizards can be unnerving to human visitors!

Outside the cities are agricultural regions, usually prairie land, on which herds of meat animals are grazed. Due to very high land prices (and rents) in the center of major cities, many individuals live in suburban areas and commute to work (if they can't work at home via computer datalink), so cities are surrounded by extensive road networks. A majority of families (even poor ones) own personal transport, ranging from wheeled vehicles to aircraft, but including a very high percentage of gravitic vehicles. Public transit is rare, but most vehicles utilize efficient microfusion reactors, so pollution is kept to a minimum.

Less industry is kept in orbit than on many advanced worlds, since the high gravity of the planet made lifting materials into space more difficult. Even so, the Drak are too rational a people to pollute their planet, and stringent environmental controls exist on all industrial operations.

CLOTHING AND COSTUME

Drakarans wear silk-like cloaks, head bands, sashes and veils on their home world, more for ornamentation then clothing. Jewelry is rarely worn — it would suffer in comparison to the bejeweled Drak armor!

On the planets they prefer to live on (hot and arid worlds) the Drak wear *sunmasks* (visor-like goggles) to protect their single eye-slit against dust and glare. On cooler (e.g., Earth-like) worlds Drakarans wear full cloaks and robes, usually in solid flat colors, sometimes with transparent fabrics. Drak rarely wear shoes or boots unless travelling off-world.

Drakarans dislike water. In very wet weather, Drakarans tend to carry parasol-like umbrellas and complain a lot.

RECREATION AND ART

Compared to humans, Drakarans spend little time engaged in leisure activities, perhaps because the stalking provides a necessary release of tension. Drak have scant interest in music, and their art and literature tends to lack subtlety.

One entertainment that is universally popular in Drak society is the Kyzinga, or silent puppet show. Kyzingas were originally performed by a class of wandering landless families who worked as migrant laborers and traders. They celebrate some traditional aspect of Drakaran society, such as marriage, the stalking, the life of a poor colonial family, or politics in the Lumog. A Kyzinga is not a single performance, but a soap-opera style cycle of plays. Most Kyzinga focus on the doings of a single family, with larger-than-life (and often humorous) characters whose lives change and develop across a dozen or more performances. These productions are usually silent, but with elaborate stages and special effects. Since most characters are cliches, it is easy for a Drakaran to understand what is going on.

Recently, some families specializing in mass entertainment have filmed Kyzinga plays using robots or computer animation, but most Drak still prefer the traditional live puppet performances.

4.8

ADVENTURE SUGGESTIONS

The Lumog will be voting on whether or not to invade a minor Imperial ally whose merchants have offended them. Elderly matriarch Ki Iriska is an important member who opposes the invasion, and her voice normally carries great weight among the other matriarches. But Iriska is dying of a rare disease for which there is no known cure among the Drakarans. She may not survive to vote, and her likely successor is known to advocate war!

Imperial diplomats have learned of this state of affairs, and believe that the superior human biotechnology can heal her, and will do so in time for the war vote, if only she can be treated by an Imperial doctor. To avoid the appearance of trying to influence the Lumog vote (which might backfire), the mission must appear to be non-official. Hence, the doctor is civilian, and rather than use Imperial security, the party are hired to act as troubleshooters.

Unfortunately, when the PCs arrive on Drak Ne'vah they find that the Tachyon Dictor message that should have preceded them has gone astray, and Ki Iriska, unaware of the promise of help and facing a lingering death, has staggered off into the Sacred Land of her ancestors without any provisions or survival gear, intending to commit ritual suicide as her Imak faith requires — just as a major dust storm approaches.

What is worse, just as the PCs arrive, the time of the Stalking is almost at hand, and all off-worlders are warned to stay inside, and lock their doors for the next week. The characters can disregard the warning and go into the Sacred Land after Ki Iriska, but several parties of Drak pilgrims are also visiting the Sacred Land, and in the mindless hunting trance of the stalking, any human entering the wilderness may be hunted as prey!

4.9

SYSTEM NOTES

Because of the Drak disdain for human speech, all starting languages must be applied to different Drakaran tongues, not to human or other languages.

In melee, Drak can claw and bite. Use the appropriate combat tables, treating both martial forms as Medium attacks. A Drak is able to develop skill in both attacks as a single Drakaran Unarmed Combat weapon skill. Drakaran hide should be treated as AT 4.

Their visual senses are slightly inferior to human (-5 on visual perception rolls) and their hearing is somewhat worse (-10 perception). A Drakaran's sense of smell is far superior, however, adding +50 to distinguish odors with a range of 30m upwind and 1000m downwind, or 60m in still air. This also adds +25 to tracking skill. The Drak can improve its ability to recognize odors as a skill: cost is 1/3 (In/Me).

Drakarans are comfortable in temperatures up to 45° C, and they need only 75% of the water a human does.

5.0

EVANTHA

The ancestors of the Evantha were mountain dwelling avian carnivores who hunted the skies of their home world in packs, swooping down and butchering grazing herbivores, dividing the kill and carrying it off to their cliff-side nests. The Evantha never *traded* "wings for intelligence," for in the light gravity and dense atmosphere of their home world both were complimentary.

Climatic changes forced the prehistoric Evantha away from their native habitats on their world's southern continent. In the colder northlands they were driven toward a greater degree of technological and social progress in order to compete with the hardier northern animals. Their innate intelligence led to the development of language, and with the aid of their dexterous lower limbs, to tools. They became roving hunters whose aerial mobility would have provoked envy in any of Earth's nomadic cultures, then herders, developed cities and reached for the stars. Called by humans Vanthians, the modern Evantha are a starfaring race of warriors and explorers. Courageous, expansionist and aggressive, they are both good friends to their allies and deadly foes to those who stand in the way of their Spiral Path to the stars.

5.1

APPEARANCE AND PHYSIOLOGY

An adult Vanthian is approximately 1.3 meters tall. The humanoid head slants backward, ending in a curving sail-like crest. The neck is long, the torso also humanoid but terminating in a fan tail that acts as a rudder when airborne and supports the body when standing. Where the arms would be on a human are the great wings, folded down to serve as clumsy legs while the Vanthian is standing upright, spread wide in flight. The wings are feathered and end in bony vestigial claws which act like feet. Where a human's legs would be are the Vanthian's arms, ending in hands with three fingers, tipped with sharp claws, and two opposing "thumbs" on opposite sides of the hand.

Their skin is pale, almost white, and Vanthians are 25% more vulnerable than humans to UV rays from sunlight or starlight. Feathers cover the crest bone, tail and wings, light blue and white on females, bright blue and violet on the males, although individual patterns vary as much as human facial features. The colors are duller both before puberty and after middle age.

The face is very human, the most alien feature being the eyes, large ovals that are slightly slanted with no brows, set somewhat to either side of the head to provide peripheral vision. The nose is small and flat as are the ears. The mouth is filled with sharp teeth, the chin prominent.

Vanthian senses are roughly equivalent to our own. Although their hearing is good in their own dense atmosphere, it is inferior to a human's in lighter air pressures. Vision is superior to the human norm, much better at longer ranges, slightly poorer closer up. While the Vanthians are diurnal (prefer day) their eyes are designed to amplify the weakened sunlight that penetrates Evantha's thick atmosphere and are not comfortable in bright light without polarized sunglasses (-15 on vision Perception rolls and on ranged combat without protection).

The Vanthian bio-chemistry is carbon based, utilizing left handed amino acids and DNA. They are warm-blooded: females have two breasts. Reproduction is also similar to a human's. Vanthian infants are carried by the mother for a shorter time than human babies before birth (flying while pregnant is difficult) and take somewhat longer to mature.

Their bones are light but exceptionally strong for their weight, while their metabolism is extraordinarily efficient, permitting wing powered flight in the light gravity and dense atmosphere of their home world and similar environments (usually artificial space habitats). Even so, their bones are fragile by human standards and the Vanthian must eat often to satisfy the demands of his or her metabolism.

A Vanthian reaches maturity after 8 earth-years, and lives for about as long as human.

FAVORED ECOSYSTEM

Although the Vanthians control several star systems, they are most comfortable on their home world of Evantha where the low gravity (0.7 G) and dense oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere (1.25 Terran standard) allows them to fly. But such planets are rare and as a result most Vanthians dwelling off world have chosen to live in ships or space habitats where the environment can be adjusted to match the peculiar conditions of their home.

DIET

The Evantha are carnivores who feel food tastes best when its caught on the wing after a good chase. Ship crew may make due with preserved meat reheated to body temperatures. Spices and vegetables are occasionally used for seasoning preserved meat, but this is rare. Milk and alcohol are drunk, often mixed together.

Vanthians tend to be messy eaters, and meals (as opposed to hunts) are not social occasions. Like many carnivores they are somewhat fussy eaters, and have not adapted well to other planet's foodstuffs.

5.2
LANGUAGE

The dominant Vanthian language is called Detran, which is difficult but not impossible for humans to learn. Numerous dialects and other languages exist, and many private and government organizations have their own secret languages known only to their initiates. Military units typically have exotic battle languages designed to rapidly convey information in combat.

NAMES

Vanthians have two names. The first (parental) name is the same as the mother (if male) or father (if female), while the second (personal) name is chosen by the parents. Most Vanthian names consist of one, two (male) or three (female) syllables, ending in u, i, a or y. Typical names might be Rudi, Kiya, Chay, Shida, female names include Kay, Istaru, Miraiya, Lai, Shythari. Most names relate to personality or religion (Rudi means "sacred warrior" in a pre-Detran language, Shythari "touched by fire").

PSYCHOLOGY

Evantha are claustrophobic in confined spaces with the exception of aircraft and spacecraft, as long as they are moving and can see out! Freedom to fly is essential, and personal space is very important both to move in and have room for decision. The Evantha don't like to be forced into a corner, literally or figuratively: one reason for the race's expansionist interstellar policy.

Vanthians are as willing as humans to obey authority but require considerable freedom to display their own initiative and style, and they want to know where they are going. Leaders will tell a subordinate what needs to be done and why, but rarely how to do it. Few formalized procedures exist for doing things in Evantha society. Bureaucracy is alien to their culture, record keeping a necessary evil, but evil nevertheless.

Evantha are a warm people, but close same-gender friendships are very, very rare. Although respect and cooperation between members of the same sex are likely, Evantha find the idea of being a close friend to someone you can't mate with unthinkable, and consider human same-sex friendships faintly disgusting. Evantha tend to carry over this view unconsciously when dealing with other races, especially those that appear humanoid. For example, a male Evantha will have difficulty making friends with a male human.

Far more than a human infant, Vanthian children are emotionally and physically dependant on their parents. When they become adults, most find a substitute family by devoting themselves to a cause larger than themselves, not so much on its own merits as to give direction to their lives. Many become fanatical followers of religions, individuals or organizations, while their leaders are true believers in the cause. Every Vanthian wants to become a valued part of something that is going somewhere. Exactly where doesn't always matter.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Evanthan society is sexually egalitarian. Most Evantha do not take a mate until late in life, when they are able to devote all their energy to their family, and they typically choose a mate with the same occupation as their own. A Vanthian family consists of two parents and a few children. The Evantha mate for life, refusing to take a second mate if their first dies, and the bonds between mates and between parent and children are very strong. Vanthians with children devote much of their time to their care and education, and the children accompany the parents as much as possible at home and during work. Children will even be present at military bases or in naval spacecraft, and certainly on merchant ships, and when old enough will assist their parents.

Due to their low tolerance of gravity fields humans would consider normal, most Evantha encountered in human space will be from a narrow range of professions that enable them to remain in a low or zero gee environment. Astronauts of all types are common encounters, and with their good reflexes it's likely Vanthian pilots would be in great demand! Of course, Vanthians in their own society can be from any profession: there are Vanthian criminals (fanatically dedicated to their clandestine organizations) and missionaries, scientists and soldiers.

POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Evantha has only had world government for the last fifty years, when Shirani Kay, the charismatic Maia (dictator) of the nation of Detrans forcibly united the other squabbling nation states under the banner of her Spiral Path party, dedicated to world unification, interstellar expansion, free enterprise and support of the dominant religion. Members of Spiral Path fill all world government positions, but anyone can join the party provided they have served five years in the Dark Wing military and swear a personal oath of allegiance to the Maia. Party members now comprise over a fifth of the Vanthian adult population, but the dictatorship is far from total. Municipal government is left to the citizens of individual cities and towns, using computerized Athenian democracy, generally without interference from the central government.

The Maia's elite Dark Wing military forces and the support of the Initiates of Light religion (see below) who consider her Shi Kythari (an Angel of Light and Fire) have maintained her rule. Although there is some opposition remaining from the fanatic followers of various nationalistic and idealistic groups, her ethos agrees with that of most Vanthians, her optimistic vision of the future, world peace and a high standard of living are hard to oppose, and the spaceships run on time. Her designated successor is her daughter Shythari, currently a young officer in the Dark Wing.

While many Vanthians devote themselves to the Spiral Path, all Evantha are looking for a focus to their lives. Many other organizations exist similar to those in a human empire, each with its own compliment of diehard members. Two of the major ones are described below:

THE DARK WING

The military is a respected career among the Evantha. The Evanthan military forces are the Dark Wing, an elite military unit zealously devoted to the Maia. Numbering over a million soldiers, the Dark Wing is well equipped with the latest in military technology, including both ground, air and space vehicles.

The Dark Wing consists of eight Shadow Fleets. A typical *Shadow Fleet* consists of twenty line cruisers, thirty support cruisers, and some 350 SMAC fighters, plus ten giant assault carriers carrying some 5,000 marines — the rough equal of an Imperial Starmada. The entire Vanthian war machine is a tenth the size of the Imperium's, making them one of the major military powers in this part of the galaxy.

RELIGION AND MYSTICISM: THE INITIATES OF LIGHT

The dominant Vanthian religion is known as the Initiates of Light, and has over a billion fanatical followers. They believe in a strict religious dualism, the struggle between Kythari, who represents order, creativity, and light, and Lir who is the force of entropy, evil and darkness. Unfortunately, Lir is winning, and it's up the Initiates to change this. The faith believes in reincarnation of the most devoted followers of Kythari and in "angels of light and darkness" who are individuals sent into the world as messengers and representatives of the two warring powers.

The religion has a central hierarchy, and these Initiates of the Light have immense political and social influence. All followers of Kythari are expected to fight against Lir, both by embracing Kythari through meditation and ritual and by spreading the faith. Elite religious fighting orders (the "Talons of Kythari") exist to more actively oppose Lir's minions. The Talons are equipped much as are Dark Wing units, and together form the equivalent of another two Shadow Fleets,

adding significantly to Evantha military power. The Talons include the famous "Sword of Light" regiment, equipped with powered armor, SMAC fighters, AFVs, and combat missionaries.

It should be noted that the Talons are volunteer forces, and are not under government control. However, with the Spiral Path government supporting Kythari most other religions are in decline. The exception is the growing heretical worship of Lir, which has provided a focus for dissidents who oppose the Maia.

Io-Seth

Idiomatically translated as "the Scales of Justice," this is a vigilante group fanatically dedicated to preventing injustice and oppression of individuals. Although they are few in number, with under ten thousand members, the Scales of Justice are well-funded from private donations and well equipped with the latest in technology, including powered armor, spacecraft and military weapons. Members must pass rigid mental and physical testing, and are required to possess considerable legal knowledge, superior combat skills, and excellent judgement to see both sides of a dispute. They live by a rigid code of honor, wandering the stars and dispensing justice to all they encounter. The organization is not sanctioned by the Initiates of Light, but most Io-Seth members are followers of that religion. Their chief opponents are government when it oppresses the individual, unscrupulous corporations, and organized crime.

Interstellar Relations

The Evanthan are located on the edge of human space, and as yet have not come into widespread contact with the Imperium. Still, Vanthian worlds have been visited by human traders and travellers, and some wars have been fought between the Dark Wing and the forces of isolated Renegade Houses for control of outlying colony worlds and resource-rich frontier systems. The ambitions and military potential of the Evantha have not gone unnoticed by the Imperium, and agents from the IID, League of Merchants, and many of the Major Houses are known to be operating in Vanthian space. All are aware that the Maia could be a useful ally, or a terrible foe.

The Evantha empire consists of nearly a hundred star systems and at least twenty-two habitable planets. Vanthian colonies are of three types.

Most common is the industrial outpost, on a world whose high gravity would preclude Vanthian settlement but which nevertheless has valuable resources of some sort. In such situations an orbiting space habitat, taking the form of a rotating torus, may be constructed. Vanthian space habitats generally have only one fifth the population of an equivalent human space colony: these flying hunters like their room, and much of the station's interior is devoted to extensive landscaping and high ceilings. From their orbital roosts, the Evantha direct the exploitation of the planet using robots or more rarely, subject or migrant workers of another race. The exceptions are rich asteroid belts, where zero-gravity enables them to work unaided.

In contrast to the industrial stations are the rare "full colonies" where light gravity conditions matched with thick atmospheres have allowed the delicate flyers to settle on-world and abundant resources have made such settlement desirable. Typical of these are the thriving colony on the gas giant moon of Sirax, where the atmosphere, though poisonous, is dense enough to allow flight (though a respirator must be worn) and whose crystalline forests provide the inhabitants with a unique industry. Another is Dagon, a giant low density water world whose native humanoid inhabitants are no longer the planet's rulers.

Dagon is also an example of the third type of Vanthian planet, the subject world, conquered and administered by the Dark Wing. If the Vanthians cannot live on the subject planet, a Vanthian space habitat is usually constructed in orbit, serving as a starport and base for the Spiral Path and Dark Wing, and as a looming symbol of the Evantha's presence and power.

5.6
TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

Advanced technology freed most Vanthians from repetitive jobs machines could do better. As a result, the Evantha see technological progress as a good thing, and the professions of scientist and engineer are honorable ones. The Vanthian empire is as advanced as the Imperium in most areas. Vanthian equipment is beautifully made and less likely to break (+20 on any rolls vs. damage) but costs at least 50% more than an equivalent human items, the result of Evanthan preferences for individuality and style at the cost of standardization and mass production. Also, one Vanthian manufacturer's product is rarely compatible with another's. For instance, there are no standardized power cells or cartridges that fit all gadgets, each company making its own versions.

Weaponry

Due to their limited strength and preference for zero-gee combat, Vanthians prefer low recoil or recoilless weaponry such as lasers and rocket guns. In melee, Vanthians use a variety of advanced powered hand weapons, striking down on their opponents from the air, and many are expert with traditional hunting weapons such as spears or claws. Body armour is rarely worn, since it would interfere with their wings, though personal shields and light-weight vacc suits are used. Special military units may use armored exoskeletons on high gravity worlds, where they wouldn't be able to fly anyway.

Like other equipment, Vanthian weapons are of uniform high quality. As well as being less likely to break, GMs may wish to give weapons and armor a +5 to +10 bonus.

Spacecraft

Vanthian spacecraft are well-designed. Due to their claustrophobic natures and need for wing-room, crew quarters require five times normal space, and for this reason most vessels are lightly crewed and make extensive use of automation. Vanthian ships tend to have large open areas (multi-level engine rooms for example) with few doors. The ships are pressurized with a dense oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere, but gravity is kept to a minimum, allowing the Evantha to engage in spectacular zero-gee flight while on board.

Spaceship armor is rarely heavy; most manned vessels are streamlined lifting bodies, and the navy uses a lot of fighters. Military spacecraft show a preference of speed and firepower to armour and shields, using high electronic warfare levels and stealth capabilities for protection.

Commerce and Currency

Unless they are actively at war with humanity, the Evantha will be willing to trade with human (or alien) merchants. The Evantha have their own distinct monetary system, but it uses electronic credit, and is similar in function to that of the Imperium.

As an interstellar empire, the Evantha are self-sufficient in most basic goods, especially on their home world and in their full colony core systems. But a trader can still make money, buying or selling. Any cheap and high quality technological goods may be welcomed on an isolated Vanthian colony, though the Evantha tend to sneer at the mass produced items of giant human corporations as lacking in proper character.

Imports of luxury goods will probably fair better. Certain types of human intoxicants may be compatible with Evantha metabolisms, and imported meat animals from Terran space may be gourmet delicacies to the carnivorous aliens. Although alien artistic taste is hard to judge, human works of art that appeal to Vanthian psychology may be appreciated.

Vanthian technology makes up in high quality what it loses in standardization, and merchants will find many devices that can be profitably exported from Vanthians worlds into the Imperium. Vanthian devices, from laser pistols to holographic cameras, will be much in demand among the wealthy. Although if they *do* break, spare parts and factory maintenance may be difficult to come by.

Finally, the Evantha are close enough to humans that their own art and, with translation, literature, may find a market among humanity.

5.7
HOMEWORLD

The Vanthian homeworld is Evantha, the same as the racial name. The second planet of a K0 main sequence star, it slightly smaller than Earth, with a somewhat lower density: its surface gravity is 0.7 G. It has a thick oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere (1.25 Earth atmospheres pressure) and a normal axial tilt, giving it typical Earth-type seasons.

Evantha is a warm world (average temperature is 30° C) with sprawling mountain ranges and steppes, vast equatorial jungles and deserts, and several small seas dotted with volcanic islands. It has two small moons, Skaron and Charybias, and the remains of a third form a bright ring around the planet. The planet rotates once every twenty hours. The dense atmosphere retains heat and so both nights and days are warm, even during the planet's winter.

Evantha currently has a population of 1.5 billion Vanthians. Most live in cities. About 3 billion Vanthians live off world, generally in space habitats in their own and neighboring systems and in the major full colonies such as Dagon and Sirax.

With under two billion inhabitants, Evantha is less crowded than many other racial home worlds. Herds still roam the empty prairies, while small towns are more common than huge conurbations, mainly due to the difficulty of feeding large numbers of ravenous carnivores! Water or air transport is used for heavy loads, and older cities are bisected by a network of canals. All Vanthians love aircraft ("The Evantha were meant to fly, Kythari gave us wings") so SSTs and VTOLs crowd the skies. Monorails and the like are rare and subterranean transit unknown, since Vanthians are very claustrophobic.

Housing and Cities

Despite the roar of the jets, a Vanthian city is a little quieter than an Earth metropolis: the flyers have no need of noisy ground cars and miles of road, and crowded streets are non-existent. A Vanthian town is a cluster of slender skyscrapers and tall buildings, surrounded by industrial centers, air and space ports or hunting parks. Individual buildings are open and airy, with spacious rooms, balconies and skylights providing quick access to the open sky. Even so, most Vanthians would rather not remain inside. Shops and markets are open air, with goods arranged on upper balconies, and business or government meetings are conducted on the wing or during the hunt.

Clothing and Costume

Vanthians rarely wear clothing on their warm home world, and there is no nudity taboo. Feather styling, body paints and jewelry are common. Military outfits and spacers use colorful heraldic insignia on armour and space suits to identify the individual and his or her unit or ship.

5.8
ADVENTURE SUGGESTIONS

There are many ways humans can find adventure among the Evantha. Traders will discover Vanthian manufactured goods in great demand, while the Evantha have need for aliens to perform well paying jobs in high-gee environments, ranging from farmers and miners to mercenaries (which may involve conquering or peacekeeping on human-populated worlds who have fallen under the Dark Wing).

PCs could also be spies sent by the Empire to discover if the Spiral Path have any designs against the Imperium, or diplomats tasked to recruit Vanthian support for one faction or another within the Empire.

If a war broke out with the Evantha, characters could join a dissident resistance movement to overthrow the Maia or liberate a captured human world. They may find themselves facing the Dark Wing or Sword of Light as the Evantha expand into human territory.

Or the Imperium and the Evantha might be allies against some other menace, whether a xenophobic race like the Valkyrie or Tezcat, or even fighting with Vanthians against a Vanthian enemy, such as fanatical Lir cultists dedicated to the cause of universal entropy.

5.9
SYSTEM NOTES

Vanthians make excellent PCs, and are fully recommended as characters. PCs living in human space may be dissidents fleeing the Maia's takeover, Io-Seth members trying to spread justice to the universe, missionaries from the Initiates of Light, or just adventurers seeking their own destiny and a cause they can believe in.

Use the standard character generation system to create Evantha characters, using the *Alien Statistics Table* to generate their characteristics.

They possess keen vision, giving them +15 on perception rolls, and making them excellent pilots.

Their feathered wings let them fly with an equivalent WMR of 50, but they cannot fly if they wear armor or encumbrance with an effective maneuver penalty totaling (after skill) -20 or more. They can only fly on worlds with both a low gravity and a standard or dense atmosphere. Their hollow bones make them graceful, giving a +20 to movement and all Tumbling, Zero-G Maneuvering and Dance skills; but only as long as they are flying or in zero-gee or the micro-gravity of a small moon or an asteroid. Unfortunately, Crush criticals are treated as one level *more* severe due to their fragile bone structure — treat A as B, and so on. An E critical is rolled *twice*.

On the ground they are clumsy walkers, and have a WMR base of only 8. They also suffer a -10 penalty on attack and defense in melee when not airborne. They are all mildly claustrophobic, and suffer a -5 penalty on all maneuvers, and a -5 OB and DB while in any confining space unless its a moving air vehicle or spaceship which they can see out of. They are natural pilots, and receive a +10 bonus to all piloting rolls and to OB and DB when flying a ship or atmospheric craft.

Evantha can attack with their claws. Treat this as a Small attack on the *Claw Attack Table*. Evantha characters may start with or build up skill in their claw attacks. For learning purposes, treat this as Weapon Skill called *Vanthian Unarmed Combat*.

THE INHERITORS

The Inheritors resemble meter-long Chinese dragons with many limbs, and heads like hammerhead sharks. Descended from alien vermin, the self-styled Inheritors evolved in one corner of a partially completed (or partly destroyed) Dyson sphere, long after the original builders were dead or vanished.

Note: *A Dyson sphere is a habitable construct which completely envelops a star.*

The ancestors of the Inheritors survived whatever disaster overcome the sphere's creators. With the enigmatic Builders gone, the Inheritors were on their own. Gradually, evolutionary pressure from surviving Builder pest-control robots coupled with the opportunity to study and use the tools and artifacts left behind by the Builders resulted in their development of intelligence and civilization.

6.1

APPEARANCE AND PHYSIOLOGY

The Inheritors are fluorine-breathing bilaterally symmetrical oxopod vertebrates. An Inheritor's body is serpentine, one to three meters long in an adult, ending in a further meter or two of tail. Its eight limbs perform double duty as both arms and legs. Each is multiply jointed, ending in eight long, dexterous fingers tipped with small suction cups which enable the Inheritor to climb smooth walls or hang onto ceilings. It has a hammer-shaped head, with large eyes spaced on either side of its skull, which gives it superior peripheral vision.

Inheritor biochemistry is based on fluorocarbons rather than the carbon-oxygen-hydrogen chain molecules common to all Terrestrial life, with liquid sulfur replacing water as the suspension medium.

An Inheritor's body is covered in light scales formed from a flexible layer of organic plastic. The color of the scales varies. The primary sense of the Inheritors is vision, which is roughly comparable to a human's. Their secondary senses are also analogous to those of humanity.

CASTE

Inheritors are divided into three sub-species, each with a characteristic body-color.

Queens have violet bodies and are the largest and most intelligent of the castes, as well as the rarest. They live for 200 earth-years. They are highly intelligent, and can be recognized by an enlarged brain case that slopes backward from the head. A Queen is 2.5 meters long, with an additional 1.5 meters of tail. All Queens are female and capable of reproduction, mating with the Drones to produce offspring. A Queen will mate about once every 400 earth-days. 200 days later, they will lay a clutch of a dozen or so eggs. One egg in twenty will be a Drone; one egg in a two hundred will be a new Queen.

Drones have lustrous blue bodies. Drones are males, and a lucky few will be allowed to mate with the Queens to produce offspring. A Drone is the smallest Inheritor caste, having a 1.2 meter body plus a 0.8 meter tail. They live for about 70 earth-years. Drones are nearly as intelligent as Queens; their intellect is approximately equivalent to the average human.

Workers are the most common caste of Inheritors. They have pale pink or red bodies and are slightly larger than Drones, but smaller than the Queens. Workers are neuter females, incapable of reproduction, and live for about 40 earth-years. In terms of brain capacity, they are almost as intelligent as a human, but lacking in creative faculties and initiative. A worker is 2.1 meters long, with a 1.4 meter tail.

Warriors are a sub-caste of Worker. They have golden bodies, and are more aggressive, faster and braver than the average Worker.

DIET

The Inheritors are scavengers. They don't catch live food, but are able to eat almost anything organic that grows or dies in their own fluorine-based ecosystem, though naturally some things taste better than others.

In most high-tech Nests, the food vats brew tasteless nutrient soup for the lowly worker and soldier castes. Drones eat more flavorful processed food rich in necessary vitamins and minerals, while the Queen caste and their chosen Drone consorts enjoy the luxury of natural organics.

FAVORED ECOSYSTEM

The Inheritors evolved inside the endless labyrinth of pressurized passages and structures that the Builders left behind on the Sphereworld's inner surface.

The inhabited portion of the Inheritor's Sphereworld possesses almost no gravity and a hydrogen-fluorine-sulfur tetrachloride atmosphere maintained at 0.9 atmospheres pressure with a temperature of 150° Celsius. Because they evolved without gravity, the Inheritors are most comfortable in weightless or near-weightless conditions. They cannot tolerate gravity above 0.2 Gs without special powered exoskeletons or artificial gravity generators.

An Inheritor would quickly be poisoned by an oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere, while its sulfur-based circulatory fluid would solidify in any temperature that humans could survive. Similarly, any human without a vacc suit will die almost instantly if exposed to their environment: if the 150 degree temperature didn't boil his blood first, the corrosive and deadly poisonous fluorine-sulfur atmosphere would burn his lungs out and blind him in a matter of seconds. After a few hours, there wouldn't be much left.

6.2 ■

LANGUAGE

Inheritor language is musical. In order to properly learn the Inheritor language, a human must also possess Singing skill (or at least, familiarity with musical notation). Any translator will need to be hooked into a decent synthesizer program.

NAMES

Inheritor names are musical chords, the longer and more complex, the higher the caste. Humans usually refer to them by musical notation and their body color, e.g., a warrior is gold, so it might be referred to as Gold Piano in F Sharp after the instrument and note its name sounds like.

6.3 ■

PSYCHOLOGY

Worker, Drone and Warrior Inheritors are very concerned with caste and authority, and implicitly obey those of a higher caste.

The authority of senior castes are absolute. No Worker would ever disobey a Drone, and no Worker or Drone would ever think of opposing a Queen. Even offering advice without being asked is perilous. Except in dire emergencies, Workers must show the utmost deference to Queens, performing elaborate Dances of Abasement before entering their presence. The protocol for Drones is similar, but a favored Drone who is a Queen's formal consort may omit much of it.

Workers are always subservient to superior castes, or to anyone (even humans) who behaves as if they had high status. Although they can think for themselves, they are emotionally at sea without their superiors. A group of Workers will be confident, content and motivated if led (or recently instructed) by a higher caste leader, while a smaller group, unless under direct personal supervision, will be cowardly, depressed, and lacking in initiative.

Warriors are unfriendly and close-mouthed to people they don't know and aggressively hostile to enemies. If the person they are dealing with is on good terms with their superiors Warriors seem to be polite, gung-ho and cautious — much like human military cadets.

Drones are cautious or even cowardly by human standards, but this is balanced by an intense curiosity and strong social instinct. Drones are terrible gossips, but will always guage his relationship with a new acquaintance, and then will be overbearing, comradely or subservient depending on his relative status to that being.

Queens are arrogant and convinced of their own superiority. Furthermore, a Queen will be jittery without at least a dozen lower-caste followers to order around. No Queen will ever meet outsiders or travel without a bodyguard of Warriors!

Queens and Drones alike tend to be technophiles and problem solvers, little inclined to introspection. They believe that almost any problem can be solved with the proper application of know-how and common sense. They love gadgets. Inheritor ships, vehicles and devices are usually in a state of functioning dismemberment, as their owners tinker with and fine tune them.

6.4 ■

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The basic Inheritor organization is the Nest (some humans use the term Hive). A typical modern Nest — approximately equivalent to a city-state — is ruled by about two dozen violet Queens. Under them will be some five thousand Drones, and about 100,000 Workers. Although different nests may be fiercely competitive, within the nest the concept of private property does not exist. Instead, a Nest's Queens own all Nest property in common, though in practice individual Queens may possess private stocks of material goods (never land).

The Queens rule Inheritor society. They are the leaders, executives, and policy-makers, as well as the mothers of children.

Under them are the Drones who generally fill middle management, supervisory and scientific positions, and are the most likely Inheritors to be assigned to diplomatic tasks such as dealing with humans. The most important Drones are the dozen or so official consorts possessed by each Queen; it is impossible for a Drone to be a close advisor to a specific Queen without also being her mate.

Below the Drones are the Workers, who make up the proletariat of Inheritor society; they look after children, work in factories and tend to agricultural matters. A sub-caste of the Workers are the Warriors, specially bred warriors and explorers. About five percent of a Nest's workers will be Warriors, but in times of stress, this proportion will rise as high as 30 percent as instincts takes over and agitated Queens begin producing more Warrior eggs.

Since caste is biologically determined, social movement is limited, but there is a great deal of social competition within each class. This is strongest amongst the Queens, who constantly vie for ultimate power within the nest, and the Drones, with the ultimate honor being appointed consort to a senior Queen. Even workers may strive to obtain better (or less dangerous) jobs.

Children have value proportionate to their caste, but no status until they reach adulthood. Juvenile Queens are raised by and obey the Drone consorts of the Queen that bore them; all other children are raised by members of their own caste.

WORSHIP

Many religions have grown up on the Inheritor homeworld. Most are centered around the mysterious Builders, including legends that they will return at some point to reclaim their home, or that the Builders are secretly watching over the Inheritors. In some of the more primitive hives, Builder artifacts are considered sacred objects. Other common religious tenets include reincarnation into bodies of higher caste (Queens being reincarnated into Builders and passing beyond this reality) and the worship of Queens as living gods.

Religion is an generally something that is left to the Drones, Warriors and Workers. Priests or ministers are always Drones, but the Queens have little use for religion themselves, although some Queens encourage it in their followers.

6.5
POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Within each Nest, the Queens rule, with the larger the Nest, the more Queens being required to run it efficiently. Different systems have been tried by various Nests for proportioning power among the various Queens within a nest. In most cases, a nest is usually controlled by one or two of the most senior Queens as Controllers, with the others forming a "cabinet" with specific posts such as education, trade, technology or defense. Positions may rotate among Queens, or superior positions may be held by virtue of popularity, age, success in physical tests or duels, or even naked power struggles and assassination.

The population of the Sphereworld is estimated at about 3 million nests, or about three hundred billion Inheritors. Relations between these Nests are similar to those between human nation states, running the gamut from friendly trade and alliance to open warfare. For the last three centuries, about a tenth of the known Inheritor Nests have been united in a relatively stable confederation, the Circle of the Sphere, which has also taken the lead in developing interstellar travel and contacts with other races.

The sheer size of the Sphereworld means many Nests exist outside mainstream Inheritor politics, including some that are primitive.

INTERSTELLAR RELATIONS

The Inheritor Sphereworld is located in Frontier Zone 10, at the very edge of the region explored by humans. Since they developed space travel a few hundred years ago, the Inheritors have colonized some twenty star systems in the vicinity of their Sphereworld, mostly establishing bases on small airless moons and in asteroid belts, where they mine for raw materials. The majority of interstellar bases have been established by the Circle of the Sphere, but other Inheritor factions and Nests have also established colonies, sometimes leading to rivalry and even skirmishes.

There has been sporadic contact between the Inheritors and Imperial traders, and diplomatic representatives from the Imperium have met with representatives of the Circle of the Sphere, although no treaties have been signed.

With their massive population (far larger than the Imperium) and their high technology, the Inheritors are a force to be reckoned with in galactic politics. However, their inability to survive unprotected on worlds with normal gravities, moderate temperatures and oxygen-nitrogen atmospheres limits there interaction with humanity and most other races.

This has encouraged some Imperial politicians to dismiss any talk of an Inheritor "threat" as nonsense: after all, with their preference for microgravity fluorine environments they would have no interest in settling human-habitable planets.

This is short-sighted. While the Inheritors have no interest in settling planets (even with terraforming techniques to change the atmosphere, they can't do anything about the gravity), mineral-rich planets and asteroid belts are desired by fluorine breathers and oxygen breathers alike. Once the Inheritor resources in their Sphereworld become seriously depleted, there is a danger of a war over control of these resources. While Inheritor military technology is not yet up to Imperial standards, their potential numbers are enormous, their Queens are master strategists tested in inter-Nest conflict, and being-for-being, their Warrior caste is the equal of anything in known space.

So far, the Inheritors are not known to be at war with any race, though there have been a few instances of "piracy." These consisted of Inheritor patrol vessels boarding and examining other vessels who strayed into their — usually with an eye to copying their ship systems. In most such situations, ships have been returned to their owner's within a minimum amount of time, but in at least one case, a crew that tried to resist were killed by a Warrior boarding party. But these incidents have decreased recently, and traders who have made previous arrangements with the Circle of the Sphere are usually safe, although there is always the slight chance of encountering ships from a Nest that does not belong to that alliance.

The Inheritor's passion for gadgets and mass production techniques can result in them posing a serious danger to Imperial balance of trade, should they succeed in penetrating market places that have traditionally done business with the Empire. On the other hand, they offer a vast market for anyone who can find something they want (at least until their engineers learn how to copy it!).

6.6
TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

The Inheritors love gadgets, but they are not very good designers. Most of their technology was salvaged from ancient artifacts found within the Sphereworld, rather than developed from scratch. As a result, they are better at modifying someone else's designs than creating totally new technology on their own.

Most scientists and engineers are Drones, since few Queens have time for anything other than politics and administration, and Workers lack curiosity and intellect (though they make good lab assistants, technicians and factory workers). The Inheritor's earliest scientific discoveries stemmed from archaeological finds, artifacts left behind by the Builders. Science involved discovering what a Builder device did, how to operate it, and (if it was useful) how to build more. *Why* it worked was not much of a question, but gradually the Inheritors' engineer-archaeologists developed a piecemeal understanding of scientific principles.

The Inheritors still have some items of ancient technology whose principles their scientists do not fully understand, even though they know how to build copies of them. These include most anti-gravity and force field systems and many advanced weapons, some far in advance of what the Imperium has available. Most of the rest of their technology is similar to that of the Imperium, although being designed for use by eight-armed beings in a zero gravity/chlorine environment, it doesn't look very "normal."

What the Inheritors are good at is copying things, and, since they are not obsessed with developing new technology, they are also skilled at making better (or at least, cheaper and easy-to-use) versions of existing technology, although they tend to go overboard at times. The latest Inheritor personal communicator may not have any radically new physics, but it will probably be lighter, more attractive, translate communications in fifteen languages, and have the capability to display the person you are talking to in life-sized holographic projection. It also probably costs half as much and weighs about the same as the original, but will break down twice as fast.

One area of technology the Inheritors are not especially interested in is robotics and genetic engineering: in their Worker and Warrior castes, the Inheritors already have purpose-built soldiers and technicians, and see no need to develop new ones.

WEAPONRY AND WARFARE

While they were still in the equivalent of a Renaissance culture, some Inheritor scientists learned how to modified the Builders' laser tools into weapons, and how to operate existing automated factories to build them. They never developed gunpowder weapons, but did produce some pyrotechnic devices making use of exotic reactions only possible in a fluorine-sulfur environment.

All weapons employed by Inheritors are designed for a zero gravity environment, which means they must be recoilless. The favored weapons are lasers, plasma beams and disruptors. Inheritor military vehicles are often small one or two man grav sleds, since many Inheritor military actions take place *inside* the buildings and corridors of their Sphereworld.

Weapons are usually born only by the Warrior caste, who are trained in their use from infancy. Warriors are superbly skilled in weaponry and small-unit tactics, but are somewhat deficient in larger scale operational planning, and hopeless in strategy.

Normal Workers receive no military or weapon training. Drones may receive rudimentary weapons training if serving as military or scout officers, but will undergo an extensive education in tactics, military intelligence and so on. Queens usually are skilled in military strategy and sometimes tactics, but (unless promotion by assassination is the typical means of advancement in their Nest) rarely have personal skill with weapons or unarmed combat.

SPACESHIPS

The lost Builders left some space ships, antimatter-powered normal-space craft lacking FTL capability. But study of Inheritor craft revealed that most of their starship systems, especially the hypershunt, are closer to human-design! Although details are unclear, it seems likely that at some point in the last century or so the Inheritors captured a human scout or trading ship (or an alien ship using human drives) which blundered into their system.

Modifications the Inheritors have made to traditional human design include different power plants (apparently based on Builder Antimatter reactors). The ships are never streamlined, usually resembling a collection of globes joined together by sticks. Inside, the ships are a crazy three-dimensional labyrinth of small tubular passages, usually only a meter or less across, connecting into spherical rooms. There is no internal gravity.

Large ships and space stations (with crews of 1,000 or more) may have a single Queen, with the officers her consorts. Otherwise, a ship will be captained by an experienced Drone. A ship's officers are always Drones, with crew and marines being Workers or Warriors.

Inheritor spaceships, especially larger military vessels controlled by Queens, tend (when their musical notes are translated) to have incredibly pompous and vainglorious names.

COMMERCE AND CURRENCY

An Inheritor Nest is a communal economy. Money is not used. Queens may take any resources they wish, or commission any product they desire, within limits imposed by the power structure established by the other Queens and the overall wealth of the Nest. Stores providing food, goods and services do exist; Workers and Drones wear electronic medallions that show the type and level of resources that individual is authorized to receive. These resources are not limited to goods — they may include the service of servants or technicians, availability of computer time, access to records, etc.

Off-world visitors making a long term stay in a Nest (e.g., diplomatic or trade delegations) will be issued their own credit medallions. For dealing with alien markets, the Nests have agreed to establish a universal currency exchangeable with the Imperial Elmonit.

Most Nests are happy to encourage trade with other Nests, or with off-worlders. The Inheritors will often purchase (or steal!) advanced technology from other cultures, trading their cheap, well-made gadgetry for new ideas and scientific or engineering know-how. The race acquired FTL drives through this method, and their spies and agents are always eager to get access to new devices and discoveries that might prove useful.

In addition to technology exchange, the Inheritors are also eager for natural resources, particularly heavy metals. Their own solar system was swept clean of both worlds and asteroidal debris by the Builders, and since they have been sentient, the race has simply recycled existing Builder artifacts and structures to get construction materials.

6.7

SPHEREWORLD

A Dyson sphere is a giant megastructure that encloses a star, with a surface area equivalent to a billion Earth-sized planets. Such a project requires the dismantling of an entire solar system to provide building materials; only a very advanced technology (far more advanced then the Imperium) could build such an artifact.

Since any civilization with a faster-than-light drive would have little need of a Dyson sphere, it seems likely the Builders suffered from a driving imperative to expand their population, but were unable to develop hyperspace technology.

The Builders failed in their great task, for the Inheritor's sphereworld is incomplete. Much of the outer surface of the sphere is only structural beams, rigging, and giant continent-sized solar panels. Only a tiny portion — a fraction of one percent — of the structure possesses a functioning environment, and the inhabited regions are often separated by tens of thousands of kilometers of unpressurized or incomplete sectors. Yet even this fragment is equivalent to ten thousand worlds!

HOUSING AND CITIES

A typical Inheritor Nest is a city-sized region of corridors and rooms. Most Nests are located just beneath the outer surface of the sphereworld, and seem to have been originally designed as spaceports or construction centers by the Builders, hence their functioning environment and relatively finished condition.

Nests are crowded, chaotic mazes of passages and chambers, filled with bustling activity, the whole taking place within the murky yellow-green haze of the flourine-sulfur atmosphere.

The edges of the Nest contain spaceport facilities, quarters for the Workers and barracks for the Warriors. As the visitor penetrates deeper, storage areas, food vats and manufacturing centers give way to offices and scientific labs, and the quarters of the Drones and

Warriors. Toward the center are executive offices, planning rooms, computer centers, royal creches for raising young Queens. In the heart of the Nest are the Queens' chambers and the egg nurseries.

Because there is no gravity, nests are arranged three dimensionally. Passages are octagonal, with entrances on each face of the octagon. There's no difference between a wall, a floor and a ceiling: furniture and appliances are found on every side of a room. Humans visiting a Nest can go crazy searching for an "up and down" to orient themselves.

Inheritors normally sleep coiled in large, round urns.

TRAVEL

Two means of rapid transit are used on the Sphereworld.

First, it is possible to board a spacecraft, leave by an airlock, and fly over the outer shell in search for a second airlock at the destination. Functioning spaceports are common, and regular vacuum trade exists between many far-flung Nests.

Second, the Builders left behind a "cable car" system, which links environmental modules via huge pressurized cabs that run on super-strong nanocrystal wires. The cable-car network runs to all known Inheritor Nests, and extends into unexplored regions of the Sphere.

CLOTHING AND COSTUME

The Inheritors do not make or wear garments, except for protective gear for use in hostile environments. Dyes and markers are used to distinguish individuals within Drone and Worker castes. Workers and Drones have indelible symbols imprinted on their bodies to identify their job and position, or carry electronic tags.

Queens and their Drone consorts tend to be vain about their appearance, sometimes having workers polish their scales for endless amounts of time.

6.8
ADVENTURE SUGGESTIONS

One ordinary day on an orbiting outstation, the party comes across a strange sight: a weird multi-legged alien in a space suit, struggling under the heavy gravity of the habitable part of the station, wandering about as if lost, is trying to operate an electronic translator. If they stop to listen, the characters can make out the words "mercenaries," "sphereworld" and "many Elmonits."

The alien is Red Flute Concerto, an Inheritor worker. He is a pitiful character, lost, unhappy and confused. He will tell the party that he wants only to complete his mission and return to his Queen. He is not worthy.

After a few minutes of this sort of thing, the party should ask him what his mission is, and why he was babbling about "many Elmonits?" Red Flute Concerto explains. Every so often, an Inheritor Nest is torn by a power struggle between rival Queens competing for the position of Controller. Usually the loser is killed, but sometimes she is able to escape.

His beloved Queen, Violet Symphony in E Major is one such exile. Once the unchallenged leader of her Nest, a double-dealing cabal of lesser Queens conspired to overthrow her. She was forced to flee with only a few trusted followers, a mere two Warriors and six Workers, and no drones at all! If she stayed on Sphereworld, her existence would likely be bitter and short, for few Nests are interested in taking in an exiled Queen.

But Violet Symphony in E Major remembered a story told her by one of her drone-consorts (now dead, alas) who had served as a trade-delegate to the Imperium. Taking her personal fortune, she fled to the Imperium, where she heard that among humans there rare individuals who would fight not for Nest-love but for money.

She has ten million Elmonits. Will the party journey to Sphereworld to help mount a revolution to regain a Queen's rightful throne?

6.9
SYSTEM NOTES

When designing Inheritor characters, make sure that they have skills and professions appropriate to their caste. Queens will be Communicator/Administrators, drones may be Research or Field Scientists, Communicators, or Astronauts, Warriors will be Armsmen, and Workers will be Technicians. Inheritors are almost *never* telepathic.

Being born in zero-gee, Inheritors cannot stand up to normal gravity. For each 0.1 G of gravity, an Inheritor has a -5 maneuver penalty due to discomfort, and for every 0.25 G it will take one point of damage per hour. This means that in ordinary Earth-like gravity an Inheritor will be at -100 and take 4 hits per hour. On the other hand, all Inheritors can move naturally and fluidly in zero gravity or near-zero gravity: they will never lose control, and should get a +15 on any melee or maneuver rolls when they are in zero-gee and meleeing or otherwise athletically competing with races for whom such an environment is not natural.

Inheritor skin is a tough organic plastic, with AT 11.

INHERITOR PCs

A character may have an Inheritor as a PC, but there are some difficulties. Characters should take Drones, since Warriors and Workers are too single minded, and Queens have too much political power and would never go anywhere without dozens of body guards.

A possible role for a PC who doesn't want to be under the thumb of a Queen all the time might be that of an agent or trouble-shooter for a Nest who has been sent to human space, perhaps as a trade agent, diplomat, or spy, either on a specific mission or to travel with and observe humanity. The best way to introduce such a character is to have the PCs visit the Inheritor Sphereworld — the PC is the Drone assigned to the party as an interpreter and guide, and after the PCs complete whatever mission brought them to the Nest, the Queen may decide to reward (or punish!) the Inheritor PC by sending him off with the party when they leave.

PCs will have to wear Inheritor equivalents of heated space suits when adventuring with humans, and the suits will have to be designed to be self-sealing to prevent any puncture from being catastrophic. Dealing with the crushing "normal" gravity of an Earth-like world is more difficult, but this can be cancelled in a starship or space station that spins for artificial gravity by simply placing the Inheritor in a non-spinning section (e.g., the central spoke of a rotating space station). On a planet, an anti-gravity generator such as the Grav Belt Modulator (*Tech Book*, p. 25) could be adapted to cancel out the gravity around the Inheritor.

INYX

The Inyx are a race evolved from aquatic parasites. Their hosts were whale-sized sea creatures which could generate electrical currents in the same manner as electric eels. They attached themselves to their hosts' bodies, feeding off this bio-electricity. To prevent their giant hosts taking offense, they always trickled back a bit of the electric current they stole, in carefully modulated voltages designed to stimulate the pleasure centers of their hosts' brains, addicting them to the Inyx's presence.

Ecological turmoil resulting from a comet impact on their homeworld led to the rise of predators that found the hosts of the proto-Inyx especially tasty. To protect their hosts, the Inyx had to become more intelligent and cooperative. They developed the rudiments of sentient behavior, and eventually, an aquatic civilization that finally reached the stars.

Ruled by a cartel of interstellar corporations, the Inyx are a race of ruthless panderers of pleasure who will sell you anything — at their price. They are still parasites, but now they swim among the stars, and their host is human society.

7.1
APPEARANCE AND PHYSIOLOGY

Visualize a collection of seven soap bubbles, joined together to form a roughly spherical shape, with one bubble in the center and the other six spaced around it. Each bubble is a meter across, and the whole about three meters wide and high. Give every bubble a single opalescent tentacle, 2.5 meters long, 10 cm wide at the base, tapering to a finger's breadth at the tip. The entire object gives off a soft phosphorescent glow. Underwater or in zero gravity, it swims like an octopus, moving with a boneless undulating grace. That's an Inyx.

Although they are carbon-based life form utilizing traditional hydrogen-oxygen-carbon biochemistry, the Inyx push the edge of "life as we know it." Rather than being carnivores or herbivores they are *ergovores*, living storage batteries who use their tentacles to convert electricity directly into the energy needed by their bodies. Even their brains and nervous systems have more in common with a fiber-optic computer than with what we come to expect of "life."

Inyx cannot generate powerful electric shocks, but they can deliver very precise low-voltage electric currents. With practice (involving complicated biofeedback techniques), an Inyx can learn to tune these pulses to interact with the nervous system of other beings, producing electronic ecstasy. If an Inyx tentacle touches a human at the base of the spine or back of the neck, it can induce jolts of pleasure so powerful that a human will collapse!

An Inyx's primary sense is touch. Inyx skin contains many tactile receptors, and is highly sensitive. Much like cats, Inyx enjoy being stroked gently. They are sensitive enough to notice minute changes in air or water pressure, allowing an Inyx to detect moving objects within 100 meters underwater and 20 meters in a standard atmosphere. Along with touch, their other major form of perception is *hearing, and their entire skin surface acts as an audio receptor. They* can pinpoint the location of stationary humans at 50 meters underwater or 10 meters in a standard atmosphere by listening for the person's heartbeat or breathing.

Inyx do not have any direct analogue to sight, smell or taste. They do have one sense that humans lack: their tentacles can measure *electrical current voltage and amperage at a range of a few centime-*ters.

Inyx communicate by touching tentacles, sending complex electrical signals into each other's bodies. They can exchange information, including what amount to digital graphics, at about ten times the speed a human being can talk. However, they have no natural way of communicating at a distance. In this case, "Natural" is the operative word. A high proportion (perhaps as many as one-third) of Inyx are telepaths, some quite powerful. It is very likely that the widespread use of telepathic powers came about both due to the Inyx's peculiar neural structure, and because telepathic genes were an extremely favorable survival mutation, enabling groups with telepaths to function with a much higher degree of cooperative efficiency.

The Inyx are asexual. They exchange genetic material through skin pores, a process which is triggered by electrical stimulation. If two Inyx are embracing each other in their tentacles and covered in flickering blue sparks, they're probably mating, and *both* will become pregnant. Children grow out of the body, resembling bulging tumors on the central bubble. After six Earth months, the "tumor" will burst without harm to the parent, and a new Inyx will be born. Inyx reach maturity after seventeen years, and live for about 200 years.

DIET

*Inyx are ergovores, feeding on energy. Primitive Inyx drained bio-*electricity from native sea creatures, but today most Inyx utilize electrical outlets or portable battery packs.

An Inyx can drain a typical power cell in about ten minutes, or spend the same amount of time touching the power conduits of a microfusion reactor or live electrical outlet. After doing so it will gain *enough energy to function for an entire day.*

An Inyx who goes without electricity will suffer the same effects as a human who has gone without both food and water over a similar period of time.

FAVORED ECOSYSTEM

The Inyx evolved in the ocean depths of a planet with a 1.1 G gravity field and standard oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere. Inyx can survive in almost any temperature from -40° C to 100° C, in any gravity that humans can take, and in any non-corrosive atmosphere with a pressure between 0.5 and 2 atmospheres.

Although they do not need water to breathe, they can move only by swimming or by floating in zero-gee. Inyx take naturally to zero gravity, suffering none of the hardships that humans do.

When Inyx wish to move about out of water in normal gravity, they do so in transparent "fish-bowl" Travel Globes filled with liquid and equipped with a gravitic or tracked chassis. Their speed is similar to a walking human, with the globe controlled mentally by the Inyx, through direct neural interface with its Mk. 10 or better computer. Other accessories are a translator module, an electrical socket for the Inyx to draw energy from, sensitive audio pickups so that it can "feel" sounds around it, and a communicator/vidphone link to the local communications and computer net. Travel Globes are armored (AT 17), and those of high executives may mount shields or weapons.

7.2
LANGUAGE

Inyx communicate by direct neural linkage. They can speak to humans by plugging a tentacle into a portable translator module, which then translates their nerve impulses into sound. Even when translated, Inyx speech is rarely direct, and is full of double meanings, subtle shadings of the truth, allusions and metaphors.

Inyx names are untranslatable. When dealing with humans, titles such as Project Initiator or Assisting Scientist are used alongside whatever human (or alien, if dealing with aliens) nick name that the Inyx find appropriate. Inyx always choose their own nick-names, and will not put up with anything abusive or insulting.

For psychological reasons, Inyx executives in the Imperium and Renegade Houses tend to use names of Terran divinities of Eastern or Greek mythologies — Ahriman, Zeus or Gilgamesh, for example.

7.3
PSYCHOLOGY

Inyx enjoy intricate schemes and complexity for its own sake. They like both setting up and solving puzzles, and as a result, make good scientists and administrators. They are masters of the convoluted plot and the double deal. Inyx corporations delight in creating webs of obfuscating bureaucracy to ensnare the unwary. An Inyx is always is doing two or three things at once. They try to avoid finding a single solution to a problem, and always have a contingency plan, or several such plans.

Their main motivating factors are greed and personal power. Inyx domesticated several undersea animals before they achieved language. Now that they are a starfaring race, they get great pleasure out of enslaving other intelligent beings. Despite this, most Inyx are neither physically cruel nor violent. They prefer more subtle means of coercion — including telepathy, a discipline in which they are masters.

Inyx do not make friends easily, but an Inyx can have close acquaintances who it respects; its "friends" are usually professional colleagues. Mating is purely a thing that one does to produce offspring, a biological imperative performed at a certain point in life. Affection has no impact on choice of a mate, only desire for a good genetic match to produce a healthy child, and mates do not live together. The concept of "love" between unrelated adults does not exist, though Inyx nurture and care for their children as much as humans do. Still, an Inyx can feel some degree of affection for a colleague, a pet or a slave.

If they are not in positions of relative power, Inyx are very careful to avoid arguments or fights. An Inyx will always tell a stranger what it thinks he wants to hear, to avert embarrassment. If you asked an Inyx "which way to the starport lounge" and it didn't have a clue, it would give you false directions rather than suffer the embarrassment of being thought ignorant or unhelpful.

Inyx are not cowards: they do not panic easily, or run away from problems. But they are poor warriors. Unlike humans, their ancestors were never hunters, and it is a rare Inyx who has the temperament necessary to make a good soldier or armsman. They delight in power struggles and challenges, but prefer contests more subtle than direct force of arms.

If a person makes an enemy of an Inyx, it will rarely respond with direct violence. It would much rather destroy its opponent's finances, blacken the offender's reputation, sell its foe's friends into slavery and addict all his children to mind destroying drugs. When there is a chance of physical conflict, Inyx rely on agents, mercenaries and bodyguards, which may range from specially engineered fighting beasts to human or alien armsmen, often slaves or replicants conditioned for absolute loyalty.

In human terms, the virtues of the Inyx include a willingness to subordinate the individual for the needs of the group, a great deal of patience, a strong loyalty to their own species, and a vast appreciation for the culture (and art) of other races. While Inyx consider their own race to be superior to most others, they are not xenophobes: in fact, they delight in encountering new species to exploit. Inyx are equal opportunity employers, using trusted humans and other aliens in all but the very highest levels of their corporations.

7.4
SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Inyx "families" consist of only a single adult and its child, though friends may share quarters. Children are greatly prized, and carefully nurtured, with much affection lavished on them. They are educated by their parent, usually with assistance from whatever corporate organization that the parent belongs to.

Inyx society is dominated by large competing power-blocs similar to human mega-corporations. Most Inyx belong to the same corporation from birth until death. All Inyx are employees of one of three major Inyx corporations, or their hundreds of subsidiaries. The average level of education is very high, with most Inyx having equivalents of human Doctorates, and many being experts in multiple fields. The Inyx are a wealthy race, and no Inyx are common laborers or service people: this is left to slaves and replicants.

Each Inyx corporation is a complete hierarchical society in itself, with the Corporate Director at the pinnacle of power, and Regional or Divisional Directors next in line, and so on down the pyramid. The corporation provides everything from housing and recreational facilities to day care and education for children. Its employees are well cared for, both psychologically and physically: Inyx executives believe a happy worker is an efficient one. But supervision is constant if unobtrusive, and proof of corporate loyalty is just as important as efficiency in securing advancement.

SLAVERY

Inyx enjoy the sensation of owning other intelligent beings. For the same reason, they like keeping pets. All high status Inyx (scientists, corporate executives, etc.) will own one or more alien slaves; lower status Inyx typically make do with replicants, not of Inyx, but of humans or some other race.

For Inyx operating in the Imperium, human slaves are preferred, since they can be legally bought and sold and are convenient for dealing with other humans. In other regions of the galaxy, different races may be enslaved. Inyx do have some scruples: they will never enslave one of their own kind, although brainwashing, blackmail and assassination are common.

Inyx slavery is not merely physical, it is mental and emotional as well. Slaves are controlled by addiction to the sensual pleasures the Inyx can produce with their tentacles, conventional brainwashing techniques, and finally, the reward of the affection shown by an owner to a cherished pet. Inyx are experts at using both their natural abilities and modern mind control technology to break down resistance. Their techniques are effective on all but the most strong willed individuals.

An Inyx is not satisfied with a slave that is a mindlessly obedient zombie or a sullen or fearful underling: it wants one who is totally devoted to its alien master's well being, filled with love for its owner, yet capable of independent action on its master's behalf. Except for their utter loyalty and craving for their master's pleasure, Inyx slaves are indistinguishable from normal human beings. An Inyx will often have its slaves pretend to be normal employees or mercenaries in order not to have trouble with local laws that ban slavery and avoid

offending those sadly prejudiced people who do not understand how wonderful it is to be enslaved body and soul to a superior species.

Inyx prefer to create or buy slaves who are highly intelligent, and who can work as technicians, medics, scientists or soldiers. Inyx executives will typically have one or two "personal" slaves, highly skilled individuals who have been indoctrinated to absolute loyalty and are willing to sacrifice their lives to protect their master. In addition to some cover role like personal pilot or secretary, these bodyguards are usually trained armsmen, and are often telepaths, enhanced replicants or transhumans.

It is possible to free someone who has been enslaved by an Inyx, but because of the many levels of emotional dependency and neuro-psychic addiction Inyx slave conditioning involves, the task is similar to a cross between "deprogramming" a cult member and treating a drug addict. Until his mind is freed along with his body, any slave will be the enemy of those who "rescued" him, his only thought being how to best serve his Inyx master.

7.5
POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Coming from a water-world, Inyx do not think of power in terms of land or borders. As such, the power-blocs in Inyx society are closest to human mega-corporations rather than nations. Inyx corporations control people and wealth, but have no specific sovereignty over territory except in the sense of buying, owning and leasing buildings and real estate.

There are two major Inyx corporations and many smaller ones. Each corporation has strong holdings in finance, mining, manufacturing and power systems, but each also has its own specialties. Rivalry between the "big two" is especially intense, and can lead to trade wars, mercenary actions, although actual violence is always kept off the Inyx homeworld by tacit agreement. The Inyx happily use these methods against human and alien companies as well.

The "big two" Inyx corporations are Genesis and CyNet.

GENESIS

Heavily involved with genetic engineering, slavery, drug and tab manufacture, and the organized exploitation of primitive cultures, Genesis Corporation is a major supplier of transhumans and replicants in human space, specializing in recreational, combat, and covert operations models. Unrestrained by human notions of ethics or experimentation on live subjects, their labs are constantly "improving" the basic designs. Genesis is presently fragmented by a dispute between two major factions on its board of directors: the Evolutionists, who wish to use eugenics and genetic engineering to build the ultimate "transinyx" and the Dominators, who would restrict genetic engineering to alien stock. Genesis controls a large fleet of exploration vessels that continually seek out new worlds to add to its vast market, as well as lightly defended primitive planets which may be valuable sources for slaves.

CYNET

This corporation manufactures computers, cybernetics and communications systems, and is a rival of Virtual Humanotronics. They have a lucrative sideline in the entertainment and media industry, controlling many holovid stations, interstellar news programs, and production studios. In fact, CyNet's extensive purchases of human entertainment and cultural industries have alarmed some Imperial observers, who fear that the Inyx will be in a position to influence human cultural values. CyNet also has interests in many advertising and image consultant firms. If you are a Minor Clan dictator who

needs a facelift, or Minor House director who wants to raise taxes painlessly, contact CyNet — they'll find a way to convince the people its in their best interests!

INTERSTELLAR RELATIONS

The Inyx have been part of the Imperium for the last few centuries. The first Inyx to encounter humans were starships manned by Genesis Corporation, who were looking for new markets or sources of slaves. At the time, the Inyx had already encountered a few lost human colonies, and when they met the Imperium, they carefully maintained the facade of a peaceful, industrious corporate society that had just developed interstellar travel, and their leadership indicated a willingness to become part of the empire, accept an Imperial garrison on their watery planet, and merge their economy with the Imperium.

Like the Trilopters, they were granted Minor Clan status, and assimilated gracefully into the Imperium, retaining control of their own planet they called Matrix and the three worlds they had apparently visited and established outposts on. Realizing that their physical shape and personal habits did nothing to reassure the mass of humanity as to their benign intentions, the Inyx avoided directly dealing with humans, preferring to control their corporations through agents, replicants, and computers. As a result, the details of their racial evolution or culture known to few. Actual Inyx are rarely seen (either in the flesh or through video) by any but their conditioned slaves and trusted upper executives. The billion or so human employees of CyNet and Genesis tend to forget (or don't want to remember) that their ultimate bosses are decidedly inhuman.

The Inyx have remained a loyal part of the Imperium over the four hundred years since they were first encountered. But recently, Imperial agents came to suspect that the frontier world known as Matrix was *not* the Inyx homeworld, but was merely itself a colony planet! Unfortunately, by this point the Inyx were so deeply integrated into Imperial society that any overt action would cause severe disruption of the Imperial economy.

VegaPol and the Imperial Government are uncertain as to how much of a threat the Inyx actually are. They have no military, and their physical holdings are small. But if the recent reports are to be believed, they have deeply infiltrated (some would say infested) both the Imperial economy and that of at least two other races and several Renegade Houses! Moreover, while they own few worlds outright, they have actively leased sea and ocean regions on scores of lightly inhabited worlds throughout Imperial space. Few local governments object to renting out "useless" areas of ocean floor at seemingly exorbitant rates. With this extra living space, the Inyx population has literally exploded, and there may be as many as six billion Inyx living in and around the Imperium, mostly scattered in small high-tech underwater settlements, going largely unnoticed by the surface-dwelling human colonists whose worlds they share.

So far, the Inyx have remained relatively good corporate citizens, restricting activities such as drug smuggling and sale of illegal replicants to frontier colonies and renegade houses beyond the Imperial border. But MERLOGH and VegaPol are becoming increasingly concerned that a large segment of the Imperial economy is in the hands of alien slavemasters who see humanity merely as useful slaves and dupes, another market to be exploited in the Inyx road to economic domination of the universe.

RELIGION AND MYSTICISM

Religion is uncommon among the Inyx: they are atheists who only worship efficiency, and consider mystical experiences to be, at best, hallucinations or misunderstood psychic powers.

They are not indifferent to religion, recognizing its value as a tool and commodity. In fact, CyNet owns interests in several religious organizations, and runs many evangelical broadcasting stations.

They *do* enjoy being worshipped as gods by primitive societies.

7.6
TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

As members of the Imperium, Inyx have access to the full range of Imperial technology. But Inyx devices have a characteristic "techno-organic" look, as if they have been half-melted and then molded back together, or as if they had been grown rather than built — which in many cases may be true. Similarly, in the course of their normal operation, other Inyx devices have a disturbing tendency to change shape, pulse, or turn inside out. Another obvious difference between human and Inyx devices is that Inyx equipment lacks the visual displays, markings, readouts or indicator lights that a human device would have. The reason is simple: Inyx cannot see, and information is conveyed by changes in temperature, sequential electrical shocks, sonic pulses, and vibrations. A human can learn to read an Inyx control panel, but it takes a lot of practice and an iron nerve!

Unlike humans, Inyx metabolisms are well suited for direct "interface" with computers, since their brains are basically living computers in the first place. The Inyx fit many of their own computers and consoles with "cyberface" sockets. When an Inyx inserts its tentacle into such a socket, it can directly link its nervous system to the computer, enabling much more precise control, and direct "data-dump" from the computer to its brain. This gives the Inyx a +50 bonus in any skill roll involving programming or accessing computers, though of course the computer must have been modified in the first place — adding a cyberface costs some 15,000 Elmonits. Cyberface plugs can also be added to vehicle or spacecraft controls, giving a +15 bonus to maneuver rolls for piloting, navigation, gunnery and sensor/EW operation.

Inyx are especially sophisticated in the field of genetic engineering, making some of the finest alterant replicants in human space, including replicant versions of alien species they have encountered. Since they contacted humanity, they have engaged in a program of eugenics research, and produce their own series of Transhumans, many with exotic abilities. It is rumored that several varieties of "Transinyx" also exist, possibly with enhanced telepathic powers, but the Inyx are notably reticent on this point.

Inyx are reasonably good physical scientists, and have experimented with advanced force shields, antimatter production, and the like. Some of their greatest advances have come in the area of psionic technology, where they have developed several different organic and physical means of influencing telepathic ability. They are fair computer and electronics manufacturers, but despite their interest in these areas, are no more innovative here than humans — perhaps because, with their ability to interface with computers, they have less need for ultra-advanced hardware or software.

Heavy industry is not the Inyx's field, and they prefer to buy such things as spaceship hulls or mining equipment from Imperial corporations. They have marketed their unique construction coral (see *Housing and Cities*) throughout human space, even developing species that could live on land. Although most humans prefer traditional building materials, on some planets where these are in short supply, entire human cities have been constructed out of Inyx coral.

WEAPONRY

Although they are not pacifists, Inyx favor neural and stun weaponry. Why kill someone when you can capture them, interrogate them, and then sell them into slavery?

However, Inyx bodyguards are usually equipped with the best weaponry that is available. Guards in Inyx underwater installations will use sonic weapons, since water is an ideal medium for transference of sound.

Inyx do not use body armor, but no Inyx executive will go anywhere without a high-quality Shield belt.

SPACESHIPS

Inyx no longer make their own spacecraft, preferring to buy human designs modified for their own particular needs. This requires larger corridors, and adding cyberface plugs to the controls, enabling the Inyx to "fly by mind." Inyx retain the human life systems, since they generally have several humanoid slaves. Their own quarters are dominated by large baths, and electric outlets for them to use when recharging.

The Inyx are aquatic, but while they do not breathe water, they like the freedom of movement it offers. But since water takes up a lot of mass which cannot be spared in a starship, Inyx ships and space stations are usually kept in zero-gee conditions, enabling the Inyx to move around as freely as if they were swimming underwater.

CURRENCY AND COMMERCE

Estimates suggest that together, the two Inyx corporations now own a greater portion of the Imperial economy then some Imperial provinces, and may be comparable in influence to Intracom or the League of Merchants. (Indeed, a few have whispered that the League is merely a front for the Inyx.) Aside from their penetration into the legitimate market place, Genesis corporation controls a substantial share of the slave-running and illegal drug and replicant trade, and CyNet has been involved in everything from gambling and pornography to death sports — all through carefully managed dummy corporations and subsidiaries, of course.

7.7
HOMEWORLD

The Inyx's ostensible homeworld, Matrix, is an Earth-sized world with a 0.9 G gravity field and an oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere. The entire planet is covered with water, with only a few island chains. The planet is quite warm, but weather conditions are very turbulent, since storms and hurricanes never break on land.

Matrix has a small metallic moon in close orbit, tidally locked to the planet. The moon, Zero, has a major Inyx city and with its rich mineral resources, houses most of the planet's heavy industry.

Matrix has a population of 2 billion Inyx and 5 billion replicants and slaves, most of whom are human. Some humans have been genetically engineered to live underwater, their lungs replaced with gills.

Although Matrix may not the Inyx homeworld, it is expected that their real home is relatively similar to it.

HOUSING AND CITIES

On their homeworld, and their underwater colonies, Inyx live in cities constructed from genetically engineered coral.

Inyx *construction coral* comes in many varieties, including luminescent species that produce or carry electrical currents, and which can be used as power conduits. Other species exist that secrete metals, forming carefully managed internal impurities that can function as electrical circuit boards for a variety of purposes.

Inyx buildings are usually one-storey structures that follow a radial or spiral pattern, with important control centers or offices in the center, and outer chambers. Doors, airlocks and windows are living membranes, much like macroscopic cell walls, and literally regrow after they have been penetrated.

RECREATION AND ART

Physical sports are not enjoyed by Inyx; they prefer intellectual games, from chess to intricate puzzles. They find human popular culture (and those of some other alien races, like the Evantha) endlessly fascinating, especially enjoying translations of written literature. They claim to enjoy the feel of human sculpture, and to appreciate some forms of music. Lacking a visual sense or the neurological "wiring" to interpret such information, paintings, motion pictures and holographic art does nothing for them.

Inyx believe that the greatest cultural invention of mankind was the bubble bath: they love the feel of warm water and exotic salts, oils or soaps on their skin. An Inyx idea of a good rest is to relax in a bubble bath, scanning the latest financial reports while being stroked gently by the talented fingers of a well-trained slave.

CLOTHING AND FASHION

The Inyx do not wear clothing, jewelry or the like, except for necessary items like Ident Disks. Personal equipment is usually carried by a spare tentacle. An Inyx may have a pouch for small personal items strapped to a tentacle, but is more likely to have a flunky (generally a slave or replicant, but if they are illegal, an underling) to carry its gear.

7.8
ADVENTURE SUGGESTIONS

Inyx are delightful master villains for the GM to use in setting up complex plots, especially if a "cyberpunk" style atmosphere of corporate intrigue, double-crossing, brainwashing and biological intrigue is desired. In any adventure involving Inyx, characters should be constantly faced with shifting loyalties and uncertainty as to who and what is real. For instance:

A human businessman says that his four year old daughter Mara has been kidnapped by Genesis Corporation because he offended an Inyx executive. Now they plan to brainwash her into a slave if he doesn't submit to blackmail. He wants to hire the party to rescue her, and is willing to pay 100,000 Elmonits to do it.

It's a dangerous mission: the lab is located on Garuda III, a joint human/Inyx colony world, and is in the heart of an underwater Inyx coral city owned by Genesis Corporation. But the businessman has secured false papers that identify the party as one of Genesis' human executives and his entourage come to tour the facility. If the characters play it cool, they should be able to get in. Getting out may be more difficult.

But not all is as it seems: the "bereaved businessman" actually works for CyNet, Genesis's rival Inyx corporation. He's actually a brainwashed slave himself, totally loyal to Hecate, CyNet's regional Director of Covert Operations. And the "daughter" is not his child at all, but a Transhuman infant intended to be the next stage in Genesis' super-telepath program. CyNet desperately wants the child so it can study her genetic pattern and behavior conditioning, and so break the Genesis monopoly on Inyx Transhuman research. Finally, the human owned corporation the "businessman" supposedly works for is a real one, but it is a *rival* of CyNet. If the plan falls through and the party are captured by Genesis and interrogated, then Genesis will believe it was being attacked by a rival human company, and will direct its revenge against this human corporation, saving CyNet the trouble of eliminating its own competitor!

Will the characters discover that they are pawns in a power struggle between two sinister organizations? They might if they do some digging before hand, or take the time to crack into Genesis corporation files once they get into the lab to find out what was going on, rather just snatching the infant girl and running. And if they find out the truth, will they still be willing to turn little Mara over to another ruthless "owner" or will they want to keep her, perhaps to raise on their own?

Finally, Mara is being bred as an ultimate super-telepath. CyNet believes her powers have not yet developed — but what if they are wrong, and the stress of kidnapping her brings them to life. Would the child aid the party, or strike out against them for taking her away from the only "home" she knows?

7.9
SYSTEM NOTES

Inyx characters should be designed in the same way as human characters; just use the Inyx modifiers from the *Alien Statistics Table*. Inyx should always be Field Scientists, Research Scientists, Communicators, or Telepaths. If an Inyx needs a Technician, Armsman or Astronaut, it hires someone or uses a slave or replicant.

Inyx skin is AT 3. Adjust all critical results to affect an Inyx body. Basically, any damage to a limb should apply to a tentacle, and any damage to eyes, ears, etc. should be ignored. Extra hits are still inflicted, however.

Remember that Inyx have multiple tentacles: an Inyx can use three tentacles at once to perform any non-combat tasks. Inyx lack the dexterity or training to attack with more than one tentacle at a time, however.

Inyx can develop skill in using their tentacles to attack with — treat this as a Weapon Skill called *Inyx Unarmed Combat*. Tentacles can perform one Medium Grapple attack per round. If an Inyx successfully hits, it can use its "neural pulse" ability to flood its victim with pleasure. The target must make a RR vs. the Inyx's level or collapse, writhing in pleasure, for 1D10 rounds. Add Self Discipline Bonus to resist. The victim is incapacitated for a length of time depending on the effect severity: mild (1D10 rnds), moderate (2D10 rnds), serious (2D10 minutes), extreme (dies of pleasure).

Inyx can addict people to their nerve jolts. Treat this as a drug with an Addiction Factor (AF) equal to the Inyx's level x 10, but requiring repeated exposure over several hours, which is possible only on a prisoner.

8.0

LITHKIND

Tiny and beautiful humanoids, the Lithkind are cursed with a reproductive cycle in which females eat their mates, and are later devoured by their own offspring, who hatch inside them. This has spawned a bizarre social system, a highly conservative culture in which males and females are segregated, and every aspect of daily life is steeped in mysticism and ritual. The Lithkind evolved in the tree branches of their planet Izyme's southern continent. When climatic changes threatened their sedentary lives, the Lithkind became nomadic hunters. They developed fire, clothing, tools and weapons, and tamed the fierce Icebats who came up out of the frozen south. When the ice retreated, the Lithkind returned to their trees, but this time developed vast arboreal cities, domesticating many varieties of fungus, animal and insect. With cities came civilization, science, industry and eventually, the stars.

8.1
APPEARANCE AND PHYSIOLOGY

Standing only three feet tall and weighing 15 to 20 kg, the Lithkind are among the smallest of known sentient races, and resemble sprites or pixies out of human myth.

Their faces are surprisingly human, or perhaps "elven": eyes are a large, slit-pupiled emerald green, and their ears are delicately pointed. Otherwise, their visage is similar to a delicate featured human, save for a total lack of eyebrows or facial hair. Concealed by their thin lips are multiple rows of needle-like teeth. Lithkind rarely smile with their mouths open; when they do, it can be a shock!

Aside from their small size, the most exotic feature is their "hair," a mass of rippling blue and green pencil-thick tendrils that reaches half way down their back. Their skin is smooth and hairless, blue as the sea. Their limbs are human-like, although their legs are a trifle longer in proportion to their bodies then those of mankind, and their fingers and toes have an extra joint. They are slim for their height, and possess a long prehensile tail.

The Lithkind are nocturnal. They have very sharp ears while their eyes can gather starlight, letting them see well in anything but total darkness. However, their color vision is less acute than a human's, distinguishing fewer shades then human eyes: for a Lithkind, yellow, green and blue blur together, as do red and orange.

Lithkind have two sexes, with the females slightly larger. They are not mammals, and neither male nor female Lithkind possess breasts. Lithkind reach their full physical and mental growth after thirteen earth-years. They are then considered adults, but don't achieve puberty until an age somewhere between 35 and 40. Unlike humans, the Lithkind *must* mate at specific points in their lives, or suffer a fatal build-up of hormone-like chemicals. As hormones begin to surge through its body, a Lithkind will feel an increasing desire for a mate. A Lithkind who does not take a mate by age 40 will suffer insanity and finally death in painful convulsions.

When Lithkind finally mate, both partners will be consumed by a raging flood-tide of desire, but the female's strength will be artificially enhanced by adrenaline-like chemicals. Courtships are violent affairs. They end when the female Lithkind rips open her husband's abdomen and devours his spore-pods. The male dies, and the now-fertilized female collapses into a deep sleep lasting several days.

A pregnant Lithkind is quiet, although there may be a few hours when she will be awake, ravenously hungry, and any threat will be met with a berzerk defense. Lithkind females always carry matched male and female twins or quadruplets. Life and pregnancy ends three months later, when two or four young Lithkind eat their way out of their mother's womb. No Lithkind ever dies of old age.

Diet

Lithkind have a very high metabolic rate and they must eat often to maintain their body temperature. Lithkind require slightly more food then a human does, and regularly eat four meals per day.

They are omnivorous, raising a variety of animals and plants for food, although they prefer to eat eggs, small grubs and insectoids to larger meat animals. Their dwelling-trees are always crawling with small ten-legged bugs native to their homeworld. Lithkind consider these a great delicacy, especially when cooked with the large orange "toadstools" that live in the lower reaches of the forest.

In spacecraft and on colonies incapable of supporting animal life, processed meat products are eaten, but even on spacecraft, Lithkind always prefer to use techniques such as hydroponics to guarantee supplies of fresh organic fungi.

Lithkind body chemistry is based around left-handed amino acids like terrestrial life, but much of their food, especially fungoid-equivalents, are poisonous to humans.

FAVORED ECOSYSTEM

The Lithkind breathe a standard oxygen-nitrogen mix at 0.97 atmospheres, and evolved on a 0.95 G world in temperate conditions. As a result, they are very comfortable on Earth-like planets. Their world had a 32 hour day/night cycle, and they usually stay awake for 20 hours, then sleep for 12. They are nocturnal, but can adapt to a diurnal schedule, although they will not operate at peak efficiency when doing so.

8.2
LANGUAGE

Lithkind voices have similar pitch and timbre to humans, with a characteristic "click" in their accents. Lithkind can learn human languages, but regard most as lacking in subtlety. Jethra is the common tongue of the planet, and is spoken by their diplomats, and most citizens on their homeworld. Cythrac is a mostly dead language, that chiefly survives in the names of many people and places, and in the curses used by old space-hands.

Lithkind body language is similar to that of humanity, but their writhing hair is an important component. A Lithkind whose hair is in motion is usually content; one whose hair stops moving is likely to be confused, agitated, or upset.

NAMES

Male names are usually four syllables, and traditionally end in an "en" or "ah" sound (e.g., Jedikirah or Fileetwaken). Female names are two syllables, and usually end in a "k" or "a" sound (e.g., Ystrack or Quilla). All names are accompanied by a series of titles listing profession, job, and clan ("eld"). Titles tend to be florid and dramatic.

For example, Prisslock, Walker in Light for the Legion of Death, Captain of Sixteen Sixteens, Ninth of Shadow in the High Trees eld, is a female Lithkind serving in the military's commando branch (to this nocturnal race, "walker in light" means something like "night stalker") who leads a battalion-sized military unit. She is from the eld, or clan, named Shadow in the High Trees. As the "ninth" she is ninth in line for the position of Ozelda, or clan-head.

8.3
PSYCHOLOGY

At the heart of the Lithkind's psychology is their belief in reincarnation, which can be seen as an attempt to come to terms with their cruel biology. When a child claws its way from the mother's womb, it is assumed to be the reincarnation of its father (if male) or mother (if female). In their own minds, Lithkind can only suffer final death from accident or mischance, since they never experience old age. Adult Lithkind take care to record every detail of their lives for their children to study, describing their plans, goals, and so on, so that the records can be given to their latest incarnation.

Lithkind are proud, individualistic, secretive, dark natured, and fatalistic. They prefer to be self-reliant whenever possible: although they will accept help when it is offered, they don't like to ask for it. They are private people, hard to get to know. They seem aloof from all but close friends, but to this select few they will be utterly loyal. It isn't easy to win a Lithkind's friendship, but once won, the Lithkind will remain steadfast, supporting the character against the outside world, right or wrong, even to the extent of breaking laws — and they will expect the character to do the same for them. Betraying this trust will is seen as treachery of the worst sort!

Lithkind never forgive an injury or a favor, and because of their belief in reincarnation, they have been known to carry blood-debts and blood-feuds that last centuries! They prefer to settle their affairs personally. The Lithkind justice system reflects this: justified blood-feud (called *ariseth*) is legally recognized and can be approved by local government bodies, and all cases emphasize settlement between individuals and their clans rather than the responsibilities of the state.

Lithkind are quite close to nature, and prefer to surround themselves with animals and plants. They like to keep pets while their houses will be adorned with attractive local plants. A common domestic animal is the Saek (humans call them "crimson snakebats"). They are long, lithe and limbless serpents with soft crimson furred bodies, large-eared bat-like heads and leathery wings sprouting from their necks just below their heads. They are fairly intelligent (though not sentient) and can be ridden by anyone weighing less than 20 kg (which includes most Lithkind). They have a dog's loyalty to their owner, and a natural homing instinct, and for that reason are allowed to run wild when not in use.

Lithkind are very superstitious. Their belief in mysticism strongly influences their daily life — see *Religion and Mysticism*, below. This is not to say that they are gullible, merely that they are conservative, and the traditions of their ancestors have a strong hold on them.

8.4 ▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆
SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Lithkind society is divided into two distinct hermicultures, in which the sexes are totally segregated. Traditionally, the cultures lived in adjoining villages. At present, cities and towns are divided into male and female quarters by the Crimson Wall which separates them. At the boundary between male and female quarters are the Houses of Conjunction, where male children are delivered after their birth.

Outside of certain rituals associated with mating, males and females have no contact with each other, even by radio or television. Cities, spaceports and transportation systems are totally segregated, and no Lithkind would dream of violating these boundaries. If a female did wander into a male area (or vice versa) she would be totally ignored, for such an act would be so unthinkable that it is easier to pretend it does not exist. Images of the opposite sex are prohibited, and only veiled references to them exist in art or literature. The taboo is so extreme that if a Lithkind stumbled upon an injured member of the opposite sex, they would walk away rather then help.

Since males and females live apart, and since females eat their mates after which the young devour their mother, biological families have no place in Lithkind society. Taking the place of the family is the Elden, or "dwellers in the life tree," a social unit similar to a human clan, but composed strictly of members of a single sex. In fact, the Elden is closer to a "village" or "city district" rather then clan, for membership is based on residence in a particular geographic area rather than blood relationship. Each Elden consists of anywhere between a hundred and a thousand members. Their most important obligation is the care and education of their members' children.

Before mating, every Lithkind will arrange to entrust all his or her wealth and worldly possessions to the Elden. After the child is born, the Elden raises the child, and makes sure that he or she inherits the parent's name, home, goods, and status. Just as importantly, the Elden uses a portion of the inheritance to pay for the education of the child in the same profession as the parent. Every Lithkind child is considered to be the reincarnation the father (if a son) or the mother (if a daughter). The Elden's goal is to ensure the child grows up into as close a copy of the parent as is possible and socially desirable.

Elden are administered by their eldest member, who takes the title Ozelda (tree-guardian). Although he or she has limited authority over day to day life, the Ozelda fulfills the twin roles of local head of government and spiritual leader. Ozeldas negotiate for their Elden with higher levels of city or rural government, collect taxes, act as magistrates, and preside at the Time of Mating.

This takes place at the start of each of Izyme's seasons (every 2 1/2 months) and lasts for a nine days. Masked and robed Ozelda from neighboring male and female Elden will meet at the sacred Places of Conjunction to arrange the details of courtships for their members who have gone into heat. Partners are selected based on eugenic considerations, with no input from the actual individuals. After many rituals, the affair is consummated in a private chamber, after which the exhausted females are removed, and the male's remains are cleared away. When the female gives birth, the male child is deposited at the Place of Conjunction for the father's Elden to reclaim.

Ostensibly, arranging these courtships are the primary justification for male and female Ozelda to meet, but the Time of Mating, with its ceremony, rituals and purification rights, is also the only period that the separate male and female governing bodies of the Lithkind can actually get together to discuss business and political matters of mutual interest. Each Place of Conjunction is a sacred "neutral ground" where male and female Ozeldas can settle outstanding disputes over legal issues, resources, land use, and economics. Even so, all cross-gender contact is restricted to the official business and lengthy purification rituals take place before and after each meeting.

RELIGION AND MYSTICISM

The Lithkind lack any form of organized priesthood or worship. They acknowledge no supreme beings. The only spirits they believe in are those of the living and the dead; there are no gods, demons or angels. Nevertheless, mystical traditions play a vital role in their society, and superstitions and magic are commonplace.

The Lithkind are a nocturnal race, and the day is filled with the same terrors for them that the night holds for humans: it is a time when predators stalk the forest, and the harsh, blinding sun beats down. Noon is an especially unlucky time, the Lithkind "witching hour" where angry spirits are abroad.

Lithkind believe that parents' spirits are reborn into their children, but any Lithkind killed by anything other than mating (for a male) or childbirth (for a female) will return as an angry ghost to haunt the living members of his or her Elden. Ghosts ("Hriu") typical appear at noon over their sleeping victims, and drink their blood, causing illness or nightmares. To prevent this happening, the body must be fed to the Icebats with full funeral rites within three days of death.

There are countless rituals and taboos in Lithkind society, all of them observed to ward off ill fortune. Every Lithkind casts Zrang Sticks or reads the stars at the start of the evening, to see what the night's events will bring. Being introduced to a new person requires the Ritual of Greeting, a touching of opposite palms so that your right hand meets the stranger's right hand, and your left meets his or her left, arms forming a cross. Any business or political deal requires that the proper divinations be cast before hand, and that token Gifts of Friendship be exchanged before any negotiations can even begin!

More formal rituals center around important events, such as the adoption of a new member into the Elden, the starting of a major enterprise, and of course, funerals, childbirth, and the Time of Mating. These rituals involve ceremonial dress, chanting, music and dance, the burning of incense, and the veneration of the ancient relics and banners of the Eld. After the formalities (which can drag on for hours), ceremonial events turn into parties where delicacies are consumed and intoxicating vapors are inhaled, to the accompaniment of music.

All Lithkind believe in magic and psychic powers. This does not mean they expect to see wizards conjuring fireballs or turning people into Crimson Snakebats any more than a human would. But fortune-telling, faith healing and precognitive dreams are widely reported, as is belief in astral projection, possession by ghosts, seances and clairvoyance. Curses and blessings are believed to have real power behind them, especially when pronounced at death or birth. Many people practice a complex astrological and necromantic system known as *Xyastra*, in which sympathetic magic is used to alter probability, and ceremonial magic calls up the ghosts of ancient sorcerers, binding the Hriu to give the magician advice, power or vengeance. Xyastra may be merely superstition, but, at least when dealing with believers, the power of suggestion can make its effects very real!

Practitioners of Xyastra are rarely "professional" sorcerers or psychics. Everyone knows simple magical rituals to ward off ill fortune or bring good luck, or curse a rude stranger. These are used casually, on a day-to-day basis. For more important matters, Elden have one or two members who are "Iristi" (a term meaning "wise") who have intensively studied Xyastra. These are called upon by their fellows as needed, preside at rituals affecting the entire Elden such as funerals of one of its members, and are responsible for instructing the Elden's children in the rudiments of psychic self-defense and family lore. Any Lithkind who's parent was an Iristi will reserve similar training; after all, they are supposed to be the reincarnation of that person.

Those rare individuals who have real psionic powers (and telepaths are as common among the Lithkind as they are among humans) will see their talents as magical in nature. They will seek to hone and train their powers through magical mental disciplines such as Xyastra — possibly with some success, if only through the power of belief and through related exercises such as meditation and visualization. Lithkind telepaths will often use "magical items" or words of power as a psychological crutch to focus their psions. This may even convince adventurers who come into contact with them that *all* Lithkind magicians use "real" magic!

Besides magic, numerology is another vital part of Lithkind mysticism. Important mystic numbers vary by regional and ethnic subcultures, but three and sixteen have universal significance. Three is considered the number of death, and is avoided at all costs. No Lithkind will enter or leave a group if it would result in it having three members, for instance. Sixteen is considered lucky: Elden are traditionally founded by sixteen members, and there are sixteen Agents of Destiny on the ruling Council of Noon.

Lithkind superstitions may seem silly, but they are a real part of the racial psyche. Any off-worlders visiting Lithkind planets who wish to avoid giving offense had better learn these customs, or no business will be done. Woe to the party of *three* adventurers who show up at *noon* to meet a Lithkind client, especially if they arrive without a proper Ritual of Greeting, wearing bright colors, and not carrying the requisite Gifts of Friendship: "Many apologies, but this meeting was obviously ill-omened. Evil would surely come if it continued. I must leave. Perhaps we can meet next year, or maybe the year after."

8.5
POLITICAL STRUCTURE

The day to day workings of Lithkind society are in the hands of local eld, who provide power, telecommunications, legal arbitration, and emergency services. Beyond the Elden, however, the workings of the Lithkind government appear very mysterious to outsiders. Two parallel bureaucracies exist to handle everything from internal revenue and justice to defense and foreign affairs, one run by females, the other by males. Even stranger, the Lithkind government appears to have no chief executive or parliament: local Ozeldas only have jurisdiction over local affairs, while the bureaucracy enforces policy, but does not make it. Who's in charge? When Lithkind are asked this question they give one answer: the Council of Noon. But no one ever sees the council, and no one knows who its members are!

The Council of Noon does exist, and is accountable to no one but itself. It is oligarchy of sorts, but a very unusual one, for although it is the executive government of an entire race, it operates in utmost secrecy. The Council of Noon has no fixed location: it meets periodically, but the location may vary among hundreds of government facilities across Lithkind space.

The Council of Noon has sixteen times sixteen members, half male and half female. Each member serves for a term of sixteen Lithkind years (about 12 earth-years). After their term is expired, their memories of having served the Council are erased through drugs and neuro-surgery. Members of the Council of Noon are known as Agents of Destiny. They leave the day-to-day running of the Lithkind government in the hands of the bureaucrats and the computers. Instead, they deal with foreign powers, important new technology, manage planetary crises, and manipulate social and economic trends to maintain a healthy, functioning society.

Agents of Destiny are encouraged to take the long view, looking to the interests of the race as whole rather than any particular segment of it. They sometimes maneuver events to act as catalysts for necessary change in the conservative Lithkind society, shattering traditions that have become dangerously outmoded.

Agents of Destiny are recruited from those rare individuals who have the potential to change or destroy society: social or economic theorists, charismatic revolutionaries, ground-breaking inventors and scientists. An Agent of Destiny must be willing to renounce their names along with their ties to elden, friends and companions. Their deaths are faked, and their appearance surgically altered. If an Agent of Destiny decides to leave the Council of Noon or is expelled before his term expires, his or her memories will be erased through neuro-surgery and drugs. Similarly, anyone learning an Agent of Destiny's true identity faces death or brainwipe.

All Agents of Destiny are injected with a *crisis key*, an ultra-sophisticated biological computer implant. The crisis key enables the Agent to access government data networks at the speed of thought. It possesses an array of passwords which command instant obedience from all government and military computer networks, including the powerful Web of Warding and the five Firestars (see *Military*, below). It can store information, giving the user total eidetic memory and photographic recall. It can provide instant estimates of the probably of success of actions the user undertakes. It is coded to the user's metabolism and genetic pattern, and will self-destruct if the agent dies or if it is removed from the Agent's body.

Through their crisis keys, social invisibility, and their own skills and knowledge, Agents of Destiny have access to the full wealth of the Lithkind civilization. They have the power to initiate research projects to develop new technology, to call upon military and civilian forces, to commandeer spacecraft and monetary funds as necessary. Agents

of Destiny are sometimes called upon to intervene personally in major crises, although they will usually do so in disguise. Still, if expecting danger, they may wear concealable body armor or force shields, and carry deadly hold-out weapons of the latest design.

The Council of Noon prefers to act with subtlety and utmost secrecy, using computer directives and lesser agents. They never appear in public. Agents have been known to rely on their ability to change government records to give themselves false identities that place them in the middle of any developing situations. For instance, in a crucial diplomatic conference, an Agent may use his crisis key to have herself assigned as a lowly foreign office aide or even a media reporter. This enables the Agent to have access to first-hand knowledge of what is going on, rather than relying on the sanitized information that filters through subordinates. When they must reveal their position, they do it secretly, without ceremony, and in disguise, using their computer codes to establish their authenticity. But when they must strike, they can do so with utmost ferocity.

Agents of Destiny are not incorruptible. Over its thousand year history, some have sought to serve themselves, their eld, or specific ideologies rather than the Lithkind as a whole. But each time, members loyal to its original purpose were able to purge the offending elements, turning the Council of Noon back to service of the Lithkind race.

ETHNIC GROUPS

In present Lithkind society two major ethnic groups exist. The Jedric are the most numerous, and are "typical Lithkind" described in the *Appearance and Physiology* section, and play the dominant role in Lithkind society. Most Jedric live on Izyme, the Lithkind homeworld, or on colony planets. They engage in regular commerce with several different alien races, and are ruled by the mysterious Council of Noon.

The Cythrac developed the earliest global Lithkind civilization, and are said to have originated the Council of Noon. Cythrac have a reputation for magical powers similar to that of the Gypsies of Old Earth. Their ears are sharply pointed, and they evolved in the tropical regions of Izyme, giving them a darker blue shade of skin then other ethnic Lithkind. Today, Cythrac are relatively few in number (10% of the populace), and are considered by turns exotic and sinister.

THE ILEET

The Ileet are a minority Lithkind culture, consisting entirely of females of Jethric descent. The Ileet are named after their founder, a genetic engineer from a female Elden who discovered a hormone that would block the onset of puberty. She advocated manufacture of this chemical to those who wished it, and the option to use cloning to reproduce.

Ileet found many supporters within her own Elden, and was elected Ozelda. But the Council of Noon decided that her ideas threatened the fabric of Lithkind society. Facing execution but unwilling to give up their beliefs, Ileet and her followers fled Izyme, eventually founding their own colony in the Zikarah Diadem, a resource-rich asteroid belt on the fringes of Lithkind interstellar society.

The colony prospered, and the result was the creation of a society of all female Lithkind who reproduce by cloning themselves, and who can live up to 70 years. Because they live in zero-gravity, they are much taller and slimmer then normal Lithkind (up to 1.5 meters tall, but still only weighing about 15 to 20 kilograms).

Aside from their lack of belief in spiritual reincarnation and all-female culture, the Ileet's society is similar to that of other Lithkind. Their Eld may be hollowed out asteroid stations or large spacecraft instead of Iz Trees, but they are still run by an Ozelda, and still have the same responsibilities. Families still do not exist: clones are only created *after* a Lithkind dies, and are raised by the Elden as new versions of the original person — the current ruler is a clone of the original Ileet, for instance, and has been trained as a leader and a genetic engineer just like she was. The Ileet even retain many Lithkind superstitions, and have added some of their own (for instance, a common though untrue belief is that meeting any Lithkind male can instantly trigger a sudden urge to mate with him).

At present, the Ileet maintain a tenuous existence as independent traders, asteroid miners, and sometimes smugglers on the fringes of Lithkind interstellar society, remaining pariahs but not outlaws. The Council of Noon tolerates them as long as they don't try to spread their beliefs and remain in their ships when visiting port. As for the rest of the Lithkind, they are considered to be somewhere between perverts and religious heretics — no one likes to travel in an Ileet ship, but most Lithkind merchants are willing to hire them to carry cargo or buy ore from them, particularly as their rates are lower then anyone else's.

INTERSTELLAR RELATIONS

The Lithkind are located in Frontier Zone 10, quite a distance from most human-settled worlds. Nevertheless, they are within the area of space reached by human traders and explorers, and individual Lithkind have visited human space, as traders, agents of the Council of Noon, or even exiles fleeing blood feuds.

Humans have an uneasy relationship with the Lithkind. Some patronize them because of their elfin features and small size, while others are shocked by their reproductive process.

Much to most Lithkind's disgust, human children like them and tend to cluster about them.

MILITARY

Lithkind military forces are small in number but well trained and equipped. They are divided into two branches, the Legion of Midnight and the Legion of Starlight. The Legion of Midnight is entirely staffed by female Lithkind, while the Legion of Starlight is entirely male.

The Legion of Midnight are the ground, aerospace and naval forces, and consist of 250,000 soldiers, organized into sixteen division-sized Battlegroups plus specialized support units. Because the Lithkind are smaller than most other races, their infantry are less effective in personal combat. Size and strength don't matter much in a firefight *per se* but do enable the stronger soldier to carry heavier weaponry, more armor and more ammunition. The Lithkind are aware of this, and as a result, Lithkind combat soldiers are primarily armored vehicle crews or pilots. Regular infantry forces are de-emphasized, except for the elite Walker in Daylight commando units and the Military Police forces who also provide security at starport and government installations. Replacing infantry for taking and holding ground, counter-insurgency, urban warfare and similar operations are an amazing variety of combat robots, roughly similar to the drones and warbots used by the Imperium, but operating in far greater numbers.

The Legion of Starlight is the Lithkind naval forces, consisting of 12 battle squadrons and 4 assault squadrons. Battle squadrons consists of five line cruisers, ten light cruisers, and twenty to thirty gunboats, and 100 or so SMAC fighters, plus support ships and about 200-300 Walker in Starlight marine commandoes. Assault squadrons have only half as many combat ships, instead having assault carriers with the capability to spacelift an entire Legion of Midnight battlegroup.

All in all, the Lithkind can command offensive military forces about 1/20th as strong as that of the Imperium.

In addition to the Legion of Starlight is the Web of Warding, an automated planetary defense system of a very high order of sophistication, controlled by hidden artificial intelligence computers buried on Izyme's moon. The Web of Warding consists of at least 200 destroyer-sized robot satellites in orbit around Izyme and scattered among strategic sites in the planet's solar system. Each satellite has no maneuver capability, but carries heavy screens, a powerful computer and electronics suite, and extensive missile, blaster and laser armament. Combined with the Legion of Midnight, they are sufficient to protect the planet against anything short of a Imperial Starmada, and even a Starmada may find itself in more trouble then it can handle.

The Lithkind system has one other special defense: the Crown of the Firestars. This is a code name for five satellites, placed in distant orbit around the planet. Each "firestar" is a relatively small (1,000 ton) unmanned satellite containing a one-use antimatter pumped gamma-ray laser weapon. When activated, the satellite aims by remote control at its target, and then explodes. The antimatter detonation pumps its energy into a devastatingly powerful (teravolt level) graser beam, capable of turning an Imperial dreadnought into a rapidly expanding ball of plasma. Because of their destructive force, the Firestars can only be activated by command from the *crisis keys* of a majority of the members of the Council of Noon.

8.6
TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

The Lithkind have had a technological, industrialized civilization for at least two thousand years, and star travel for the last six centuries. They are roughly as advanced as the Imperium, since they have not suffered from any dark ages or interregnum. Lithkind technology is highly advanced in computers, computer programs, robotics, electronics, shield and anti-gravity technology. Industrial and household robots are common, and Lithkind-shaped androids do exist for specialized purposes.

In other areas the Lithkind are less sophisticated than the Imperium. Weapon technology is not up to Imperial standards — lasers are common, but weapons such as Plasmatic Repeaters, Disruptors, and Struptorguns are not available (except possibly to Agents of Destiny). Lithkind biotechnology can produce such things as tailored microorganisms for fighting disease but does not measure up to humanity's in other fields: cloning of sentient beings is rare and expensive, and alterant replicants are unknown. Lithkind materials technology (especially in super-strong materials such as Irulon) is inferior to that of the Imperium. The Lithkind can make such materials, but at several times the Imperial cost.

WEAPONRY

Lithkind personal weapons are rarely larger than "carbine" or "assault" sizes; any weapon with a weight over about 3.5 kg is too heavy for them to use unless mounted on a bipod or tripod. Pistols over 0.5 kg mass must be used two-handed. Soldiers prefer lightweight, recoilless weapons like Assault Lasers or Rocketguns. Armor heavier than ABS is not worn, but Shields are in common use by Lithkind expecting (or looking) for trouble, and their technology is quite advanced. Belt-mounted shield generators are all of the light "cigarette pack" size.

Military robots are similar to those used by the Imperium and described in the *Tech Book*. The ARC Scout and Type III combat bot can serve as typical Lithkind designs.

Individuals and Eld practice a militant self-reliance, and the practice of blood-feud ensures that most citizens go about far better armed then the average Imperial citizen. Almost everyone carries some form of weapon, even if it's only a ceremonial razorwhip or

needlegun. Martial sports, such as whip-fighting and target shooting, are also popular. Favored civilian weapons are needleguns, lasers, and stunners, and powered melee weapons such as the force knife, and Lithkind razorwhip (see the *Artifacts* section).

SPACECRAFT

Lithkind space vehicles are similar to those used in human cultures, (i.e., varying widely depending on their mission). One feature common to all larger ships is the agricultural deck, which acts both as a valuable component to life support on long voyages and a recreational lounge for off-duty crew.

CURRENCY AND COMMERCE

Lithkind use a highly computerized electronic credit net, similar to that used in the Imperium. All individuals wear credit rings that function exactly like Imperial Elmonit systems.

Lithkind are interested in trade, and many individual merchants and small businesses would jump at the opportunity to deal with exotic Imperial traders, especially if they offer what the Lithkind are interested in.

Besides exotic biological constructs and super-alloys (for use in industry and spaceship hulls), the Lithkind also buy any alien food products that are compatible with their metabolism, and some works of Terran art. Lithkind also get along well with many brands of human alcohol: good, strong drink produces a warm euphoria which leaves them feeling calm and safe. Traders may wish to buy Lithkind computers, software or robots.

8.7
HOMEWORLD

Izyme, the Lithkind's homeworld, is the fourth planet of a yellow G0 star. Izyme is about the size of Earth, with 0.95 G surface gravity and an oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere. Izyme rotates once every 32 hours. On average, the planet is warmer than Earth, but over the long nights are cool and comfortable for both human and Lithkind alike. There are nine major landmasses, but no single large continents. Three-quarters of Izyme is covered with water, and most of the rest of the world is heavily forested, with marsh and jungle terrain predominating around the equator. Izyme's forests are dominated by the great Iz trees, which average 200 meters high and thirty meters wide.

Izyme has a single moon, Trishkat, which is about the size of Earth's Luna. Trishkat is barren and uninhabited, with no scientific bases, colonies or mining stations, though there is an empty moonbase, abandoned since the early days of Lithkind space exploration.

HOUSING AND CITIES

Most Lithkind still live in Iz trees. A sixteenth of a typical Iz tree is hollowed out, giving some 300 cubic meters of living space without doing much harm to the tree. Most trees will have 20 to 30 separate rooms, mostly on the tree's outer trunk. The branches support houses, usually made of wood and tough paper-like material, although intricate foamed metal structures are becoming increasing common. Houses are suspended 75 to 150 meters off the forest floor.

Lithkind like to live in Iz trees, in much the same way that humans seem to prefer houses over apartments. When they must live in buildings — for instance, on colony planets where the Iz trees have not had time to grow, or in major industrial centers — the Lithkind prefer vertical buildings, usually circular or hexagonal-base towers. Four-sided buildings and rooms are avoided: most floor plans are hemispherical, circular, or hexagonal. Even residential buildings are tall, with fifty floors being average, but each story will be only about

2 meters high. Office and commercial buildings regularly have 300 floors. Most towers connect to three to five other buildings, by branching tubes. Combined with the lack of lighting and dull dark green and grey color schemes preferred by the Lithkind, a city can resemble a giant overgrown forest.

Windows are relatively uncommon where air conditioning is available: Lithkind are not very claustrophobic. Colors tend to be dark. Many buildings have sub-basements containing underground fungus gardens which are often quite beautiful, with carefully sculpted terrain and quiet, still pools. Otherwise, cities are usually bare of vegetation.

Lithkind cities are fairly quiet during the day, when the nocturnal natives are asleep, but come alive at night. But they are not lighted, and humans are advised to wear infrared or light-amplifying vision gear. Moving sidewalks ("slidewalks"), many of them above ground level, are used in preference to buses or automobiles. There are no roads, only ground level sidewalks. Flying anti-grav vehicles are common for cargo, government, and emergency services, but are rare in private hands. Landing ports can be found on most buildings, though. Intercity transport is provided by elevated monorails using magnetic levitation.

Lithkind cities are very difficult for humans to visit: we are too large! Lithkind starports may have human-scale lounges and hotels. Anyone leaving these areas will feel a bit like Gulliver in Lilliput, or someone visiting kindergarten. Normal doors are only 4 feet high and a foot and a half wide, and ceilings rarely exceed 5 feet. A human will soon develop a back ache from walking hunched over.

CLOTHING

Lithkind hate bright, light colors and disdain patterns, but they love texture, preferring soft, sensual fabrics. They like simple, tight-fitting clothing which covers most of their body save for their tail and face. The typical garment is a grey or black finely-woven body stocking with a hole for their tail, plus gloves and low boots; formal wear includes a cloak, the best being made of real or imitation feathers. Lithkind are always bare-headed, and extensive jewelry is not worn, but adult female Lithkind often wear long chains of silver earrings, and adult males typically wear silver rings or torques. Sidearms and knives are worn casually by adults of both sexes at all times.

ART

Lithkind believe it to be bad luck to draw or paint images of intelligent beings, for it binds the soul to the object. Consequently, representational art and sculpture is primitive, and tends toward abstract landscapes, animal shapes, and mystical symbols. These last include an entwined double Iz-tree, symbolizing life or reincarnation, and the spiral in a circle, traditionally used as a warding symbol (like a pentagram) or in art, to suggest magic.

On the other hand, their popular music is intricate, weaving complex synthesized harmonics together with haunting lyrics. Unlike most human music, the preferred Lithkind format is the long ballad: Lithkind regard music that fails to tell a complex story as disgustingly simple. Lithkind written literature is extensive, but the cultural allusions and fragmented abstract style make it almost impenetrable to humans.

8.8
ADVENTURE SUGGESTIONS

On a world near the Lithkind border, a human merchant named Eileen Essandar hires the party to investigate a series of mysterious assassination attempts and acts of sabotage that have afflicted both her personally and the corporation that she owns. She has no idea who is behind them — she has no enemies, and can think of no business rivals who are bitter enough to try to kill her. Essandar offers the characters 100,000 Elmonits if they can discover who is behind the attacks and how to stop them.

If the party investigates the attacks or tries to set a trap for the assassins or saboteurs, they will discover an interesting fact: the attackers are typical human freelance assassins, mercenaries or the like that have been simply hired for the job — with the one oddity that all turn out to be women.

If the characters catch one of the criminals alive an interrogation will reveal that the money and orders are coming from the office of Quilla, Ozelda of High Trees Eld, on the Lithkind homeworld. That explains why the assassins were all women: High Trees is a female Elden, and although Lithkind prohibitions do not apply to Terrans, a female Lithkind may feel more comfortable dealing with female humans then with males. But further research deepens the puzzle: Eileen Essandar tells them that she has never had any dealings with the High Trees Eld, and is not in competition with it. Moreover, all records show that High Trees is a highly conservative, respectable part of Lithkind society. Why would it be trying to commit murder and sabotage against a human company?

The answer is a simple one, and lies in the past. Two hundred years ago, Eileen Essandar's great-great-grandmother, Karen, cheated a Lithkind merchant named Quilla out of a very valuable cargo of cybernetic parts, bringing shame to Quilla, and resulting in her losing her own merchant ship to creditors. Karen Essandar used the wealth to help build the company her descendent now runs. Eileen knows nothing about her ancestors shady past. But the cheated Lithkind remembered, and she passed the grudge on to all her descendants, including the present Quilla, who is not a trader but a politician. This Quilla holds the post of Ozelda of a powerful Eld, in a position where she could commit *ariseth* — justified blood feud — against her enemy. Being a Lithkind, she instinctively sees her enemy's same-sex descendants as the same person as the original enemy. And since she believes herself to be the same person as her own great-great-great-great grandmother, she takes it very personally.

The characters can discover this information by travelling to Izyme and confronting Quilla, although if they let on that they are working for Essandar, they may be in danger: Izyme law recognizes ariseth, and their would be no penalty for Quilla if she had the characters killed as agents of her enemy. Alternatively, the party may think to examine the past records of Eileen Essandar's family history: if they know about Lithkind culture, they might make the connection. Once they figure out what is going on, the best way of resolving the situation peacefully is to tell Essandar what they have discovered. She is a fair person, and would be willing to come to terms with Quilla, perhaps compensating her for the loss of her ancestor's ship — but any such negotiation should require a face to face meeting between Quilla and Essandar on Izyme — with Eileen's journey there made interesting if Quilla is unable or unwilling to call off all her assassins until *after* peace is made!

8.9
SYSTEM NOTES

Characters may be generated exactly as humans, but using the Lithkind statistic modifiers from the *Alien Statistics Table*.

To simulate Lithkind superstition, any Lithkind character who fails to perform proper rituals should have a -10 or so penalty on all rolls that day, reflecting his or her uneasiness.

Lithkind are nocturnal, with their eyes adapted for night vision rather than bright light. They have perfect sight in conditions equivalent to a normal clear night on Earth, and can see for 10 meters even in pitch darkness. However, normal sight in full daylight is

possible only with goggles or tinted lenses, and suffers a -15 Perception penalty.

Lithkind characters will begin adventuring at age 13 to 15 (equivalent to about 18-20 in a human). All Lithkind will be dead by age 40 — if a character doesn't find a mate, he or she will die of a hormone imbalance. After age 39, all Lithkind have a 5% cumulative chance per month of death, plus a -5 cumulative penalty per month to all rolls.

9.0
METAMORPHS

Metamorphs are natural shapechangers who can shift their bodies into the forms of other hominid species or suck their minds clean of knowledge, leaving only dying husks.

The origin of the Metamorphs is uncertain. It is generally believed that they are a created species. Hints from the few Metamorphs who have been willing to discuss their origin suggest they were engineered by an Elder race, and there may be connections to the God Makers of the M'sia (see the Alien Race, M'sia). Their mission was to infiltrate the many primitive hominid races scattered through this part of the galaxy and either observe their development or manipulate their cultures into paths deemed more acceptable by their masters.

When their creators ceased to act upon the interstellar stage, many of the Metamorphs were abandoned among the primitive species they were studying. With the decline of the Elder Races, these Metamorphs were left to their own devices. Powerful, amoral, and long-lived, the Metamorphs are legendary star demons who haunt the nightmares of a dozen humanoid cultures.

9.1
APPEARANCE AND PHYSIOLOGY

In its natural form, a Metamorph is a tall, slim human with somewhat androgynous features and smooth unwrinkled skin, who can be mistaken for either a young teenage boy or girl depending on clothing and hairstyle. They have flat chests, no facial hair, and very pale skins. Their head hair is a silvery white, usually shoulder length. They reproduce sexually, but are natural hermaphrodites, a single individual having both male and female reproductive organs, either of which can be retracted or concealed by simple muscular contractions.

The Metamorphs are warm blooded, and protein-based. Their biochemistry is similar to that of humanity, and their sensory, intellectual and physical abilities are almost identical, although their reflexes are somewhat faster. Except for the Metamorph ability to assume either the male or female sexual role as desired, the Metamorph reproductive process is similar to that of other hominid races. However, Metamorphs have total control over their fertility, and will never produce children unless they consciously desire it.

Metamorphs are a long-lived race, highly resistant to disease and injury. They can regenerate lost extremities such as a missing finger or eye within a year or two, and even major organ damage can be restored if not immediately fatal. Although a Metamorph could not regenerate a severed limb, all but the most severe broken bones or internal injuries will repair themselves given enough time.

Metamorphs live natural lives, typically lasting about 450 years, although with their shapechanging abilities they show no obvious signs of aging until death. They can extend their life span by periodically entering into a state of hibernation, for a minimum of a week and a maximum of five hundred years at a time. While in hibernation, they require little air and no food or water, and age at only one year in fifty. They can wake instantly from their trance if disturbed, but will be groggy (-20 on rolls) for several hours after awakening.

SHAPE CHANGING

As their name suggests, Metamorphs are natural shape shifters. They can modify their appearance to duplicate almost any hominid body, male or female, within very general limits of body size and mass. Their one constraint is time: while a Metamorph can change its facial structure quickly, to make significant alterations in muscle tone, or hair or skin requires the internal production of hormones, a process which takes some hours to complete. The only time a Metamorph is limited in its shape-changing abilities is when it is pregnant, during which time their body shape and hormonal balance must remain "female" to accommodate the growing child.

But even within these constraints, their abilities are impressive. An adult Metamorph could successively assume the forms of a slim, barely adolescent girl, a muscular professional wrestler, a pregnant middle-aged woman and a wrinkled graybeard — all within a matter of a few hours, and all in such a way that only a thorough scan with medical sensors or an actual autopsy would reveal its true nature.

The Metamorph ability to change facial features is their most spectacular accomplishment. A majority of their facial bones are actually a soft, spongy cartilage which can change shape in response to movement of voluntary muscles. Cheek and jaw bones are especially malleable, enabling the Metamorph to drastically alter its face within 30 seconds, a process which is somewhat unnerving to watch.

A Metamorph's elastic bone structure is not limited to its face. A Metamorph can also expand or contract the apparent width of its pelvic girdle, widening it to pass as a female, or leaving it narrow as a male. Leg and arm bones can also be extended or contracted slightly, altering the apparent length of the limbs, while the spinal column is also somewhat elastic, enabling the Metamorph to alter its height by up to 10%. Thus a 6' tall Metamorph could adjust its size to anything between 5'6" to 6'6"!

While a Metamorph cannot change its weight, it can assume the *appearance* of greater mass. Under their skin (especially their stomach and chest) are empty sacs, which normally lie flat. By an effort of will, the Metamorph can open internal sphincters filling them with air from its lungs. This process takes only ten seconds, and is no more exhausting then blowing up a balloon. This can give an *apparent* increase in weight (up to obesity, if desired) if the stomach sacs (and smaller sacs in the limbs, buttocks and neck) are inflated. As mentioned, Metamorphs are normally flat-chested, with the vestigial nipples of human males. By inflating the chest sacs, the Metamorph can quickly mimic female breasts, although these will be non-functional.

Metamorphs possess glands that can voluntarily produce hormones can influence the growth of facial, body, or head hair. If necessary, these glands can also give the Metamorph functional female breasts, although Metamorphs usually only use this ability when actually expecting a child. Similar techniques enable the Metamorph to manufacture steroid-like chemicals to rapidly promote or retard the growth of muscles. Either process takes about 20 hours of concentration, in a yoga-like trance. A Metamorph in a hurry may use conventional disguises (false beard, wig, or depilatory spray) to add or remove hair, and simply rely on changes to skin texture and bone structure when mimicking the opposite sex.

Through control of melanin production, they can alter their skin color from an albino paleness to a dark blue-black, or any shade in between. Similarly, they can change their hair and eye color through all normal human shades. Both require five hours of concentration to perform.

A few other adaptations aid them in their impersonations: a network of small voluntary muscles under the epidermis enable a Metamorph to modify its normally smooth skin to simulate pockmarks, veins, wrinkles, small scars and the like within 10 seconds. Their nails (both finger and toe) are instantly retractable into the digit, enabling the Metamorph to simulate an increase or decrease in length without waiting for growth, and Metamorphs have extensive control over their vocal range, with perfect pitch, and can imitate both male and female voices.

BRAIN-BORE

Underneath a Metamorph's tongue is an additional organ, the pale silvery-white *brain-bore*, a biological tool for extracting memory and information from a specific subject. It is this ability that makes the Metamorphs so feared by other humanoid races, for use of the brain-bore reduces its victim to a mindless husk.

The brain-bore can only be used on a restrained, unconscious, or sleeping subject. It extends out from the Metamorph's mouth and burrows into the victim's skull, then extends out countless microscopic filaments which penetrate into the target's hippocampus (just above the ear). A web of microfine tendrils then spreads through the target, which electrochemical reads the target's memory.

Once the brain-bore has been inserted, it paralyzes the subject and immediately begins the minute-long process of reading out his or her memories into the Metamorph's mind. The Metamorph receives basic life skills (e.g., language, customs, daily routine, and so on), a sketchy personal biography of the subject, and a detailed feel for the subject's personality. All other memories meld into a confused jumble of day-to-day experiences and feelings which are impossible to sort out. However, while the brain-bore is being made, a Metamorph specifically looking for one single piece of information (e.g., what the victim's memories of a specific person or place) will be able find it.

The after-effects of a brain bore may be fatal to the subject. Brain damage, amnesia, and memory loss will almost certainly turn the unfortunate victim into a mental vegetable. If a Metamorph is interrupted in the process of performing a brain-bore, it will take it at least 30 seconds to extract the organ, during which it will be vulnerable (no DB bonuses). However, once the initial penetration has taken place, there is nothing that can be done for the victim.

Use of the brain-bore has one other side effect: the sensations of absorbing another person's memories and personality are wickedly pleasurable. Some Metamorphs have become addicted to the feeling produced, becoming *experience addicts* who crave the sensation like a drug.

PSIONIC ABILITIES

While not all Metamorphs are telepaths, as many as a third of them exhibit some form of psionic ability, if only as semi-telepaths. Generally speaking, the older a Metamorph is, the more likely it is to have some sort of telepathic power.

DIET

Metamorphs are omnivores who can eat anything a human can. Some Metamorphs (especially the *Cult of the Chosen Ones* described below) have no compunction about eating the flesh of humans and other hominid races, usually after making a brain-bore — they are different enough that this practice does not result in increased risk of disease.

FAVORED ECOSYSTEM

Metamorphs exist within the same ecosystems as do humans, although their ability to alter the melanin content of their skin gives them a higher toleration of ultraviolet radiation then many human and hominid races.

9.2
LANGUAGE

Metamorphs have no language of their own. They use the speech of the people they are mimicking. But they are a long-lived species, and often pass on the ancient languages of long dead empires to their children. If two Metamorphs meet, they may choose to converse privately in the tongue of some vanished elder race.

NAMES

Metamorphs use names drawn from the culture they are living in; some Metamorph parents may name their children, either after the fashion of the race they are currently living among, or according to their own conceits.

9.3
PSYCHOLOGY

Metamorphs were originally designed for two purposes: to gather information, and to manipulate their host cultures. In order to do these things, they had to remain undiscovered, eliminating any beings who learned their secret. Millennia of stealth and hiding have given the Metamorphs a racial paranoia about discovery. Metamorphs instinctively seek to conceal their own existence out of generations of habit, and are utterly ruthless in protecting their secret.

Metamorphs are "loners" who hate to be dependent on anyone or anything. They prefer relationships that leave them in control, or at worst, as equal partners. No Metamorph likes to be in someone's debt or subordinate to anyone. Metamorphs prefer to be self-employed, or take employment where they have a high degree of personal freedom and initiative. A Metamorph may work for someone, but will insist on maintaining considerable freedom to do a job its own way.

All Metamorphs live like paranoid survivalists, trusting no one, and keeping whatever weapons are available handy at all times. They are compulsive liars, their lives a web of deceit.

Every Metamorph tries to have one or two false identities to fall back on in the event of discovery, with money, identity disks, places of residence, and a completely different lifestyle. Maintaining a cover identity is not always easy, especially since the Metamorph may live for several human life spans. The Metamorph can mimic the appearance of aging, of course, but occasionally it is necessary to fake a "death" and become a new person.

Even so, ruthless actions are sometimes needed to retain cover identities, and only good planning can prevent disaster. For this reason, most Metamorphs attempt to develop connections with powerful government, criminal or corporate organizations, sometimes using their unique abilities for the organization in return for the promise of latter assistance.

In one case, a Metamorph was hit by a hovercar and badly injured. "She" was taken to hospital, where surgeons discovered that the being they were treating was not human. But the Metamorph had planned for such a contingency, and had made connections with the local underworld, using the story that she was an illegal combat android on the run from a major corporation. In the event of her hospitalization, she had left careful instructions, backed with a few hundred thousand Elmonits worth of persuasion. An electronic tracer placed in its body alerted the criminals, who sprang into action. Before the story could spread to the news media and police authorities, every member of the hospital staff who were involved in the case were killed, the records were destroyed by a computer virus, and the injured Metamorph was on the way to an exclusive clinic.

9.4
SOCIAL AND POLITICAL STRUCTURES

There are only about fifty million Metamorphs in the galaxy, and their numbers are scattered through space. Metamorphs can be found living secret lives among the different branches of humanity, and among humanoid sub-races such as the Churg and the Idorians. While it is not known for sure whether Metamorphs were present on Old Earth prior to human contact with other humanoid races, the Terran legends of supernatural beings like vampires and fairies could be explained by the presence. Certainly the Metamorphs have now spread throughout the Imperium, and thousands — perhaps even millions — of Metamorphs are now living among Imperial populations.

Metamorphs have no social or political structures of their own, with the exception of the outlaw Cult of the Chosen Ones described below. Most Metamorphs prefer the company of their host species to their own kind, adopting the social values of whatever community they are living in, typically assuming a role which gives them the greatest freedom of movement and least risk of discovery. Thus, a Metamorph living in a patriarchal society with strong class distinctions based on ethnic origin would likely prefer to take the shape of a male of the ruling elite.

Metamorphs always attempt to infiltrate themselves into the local power structure, either by "replacing" a real person or by just using its own skills to rise through the ranks. If this is impossible, it will prefer to "drop out" of the traditional power structure altogether, for instance, by becoming independently wealthy or making connections with the criminal underworld.

Constantly warring with this desire to control their environment is their paranoid need for concealment. As a result, Metamorphs prefer to work behind the scenes, avoiding positions where they will be too exposed to public scrutiny. They prefer positions as political advisors, corporate executives, intelligence operatives, faceless bureaucrats or criminal masterminds. They will try to avoid occupations where the risk of accident or injury is high, since any Metamorph who was taken to a doctor would be quickly exposed as an alien. For this reason, Metamorphs rarely serve as police officers, soldiers, or professional athletes.

Metamorphs have been known to "adopt" a specific human family as a result of a close friendship or debt owed to one of the family's members. The Metamorph will assume the guise of distant (sometimes eccentric) relation who lives far away but occasionally comes

to visit. When necessary, it will act as a potent and ruthless "guardian angel" for family members in trouble. Usually only one or two people in the family over each generation will know the true origin of their mysterious benefactor, who in any case will usually change his or her identity every few decades.

Metamorphs will sometimes take humans as lovers. They may do this to maintain their disguise, or through a genuine attachment. Very occasionally a Metamorph will "fall in love" with a human being, and may even reveal its secret. Union between a Metamorph and a non-Metamorph can never result in offspring, but the couple might be able to have and raise children gained by adoption, artificial means, or other lovers.

THE CULT OF THE CHOSEN ONES

Few Metamorphs will use the brain-bore abilities except in direst need, fearing to come under the thrall of *experience addiction.* However, a minority of Metamorphs have come to revel in the dark pleasure of sucking the life experiences out of another mind. Despised by their fellow Metamorphs, these experience addicts have banded together to form a secret organization known as the Cult of the Chosen Ones, an insidious organization whose power and reach should not be underestimated.

The Cult's doctrines state the Metamorphs are supreme beings of the galaxy, created to be the true heirs to the Elder races who formed them. Cult members believe that true enlightenment can only come by enjoying the taste of other minds. The Cult of the Chosen One has Experience Temples on dozens of human-inhabited worlds, most of them within the Imperium. Cult members organize regular gatherings to enjoy the brain-bore. Some Cultists believe in selectively kidnapping individuals with "interesting" minds, such as scientists, artists, children, serial killers or media personalities, in order to enjoy the unique "flavors" of their memories.

The Cult of the Chosen Ones' goal is to recruit all Metamorphs into their organization. They often lure other Metamorphs by spreading the belief that the Cult is the heir to the secrets of the God Makers or Sianetic Harbingers. As a test of loyalty, prospective members are forced to brain-bore and absorb the minds of successive human captives until they also become experience addicts. The Cult doesn't take "no" for an answer, however, and those Metamorphs who balk at these disgusting "initiation rites" are imprisoned without food or water, until they are too weak to refuse.

Although Metamorphs always run the Cult, it has some human acolytes, typically individuals who consider the Metamorphs to be supernatural creatures who can transform a normal person into a Metamorph if he is "worthy." The Metamorphs are amused by these delusions, even as they take advantage of them: the Cult can often use human agents, and if they are "true believers" so much the better.

Besides enjoying the brain-bore, Cult meetings are devoted to expanding the organizations influence, or meeting with Siblings (other Metamorphs belonging to the Cult) to establish interstellar connections between various temples. Because the Cult of the Chosen Ones believes that the Metamorphs are direct heirs to the Elder Races, they consider all Sianetic Harbinger or other ancient artifacts to be theirs by right. As a result, the Cult will spare no effort to acquire these artifacts, either through legal purchase or through swindle, theft or murder. Cult members may also sponsor expeditions to archaeological sights in order to acquire these artifacts first hand.

Because many Metamorphs occupy positions of political or economic power, the Cult has considerable resources to draw upon. Cult leaders often hold high rank in criminal organizations, especially slave rings, the better to ensure a constant supply of minds to brain-bore.

They may also have access to ancient artifacts, including powerful weapons or defense systems. Any Temple of Experience will be well guarded by advanced security systems, including human and robot guardians.

GOVERNMENT AND METAMORPHS

Human authorities have known of the existence of the Metamorph race since before the creation of the Terran Federated Democracy, but have suppressed the information to avoid creating a panic. Even so, some rumors leak out, and on some worlds where Cult activity is common, many citizens are aware that *something* mysterious lurks in the shadows, stealing bodies and minds.

On most worlds, the discovery of a Metamorph usually prompts a witch-hunt of some sort, although in the Imperium government agencies will usually step quickly in to cover up evidence and assume the chase themselves. Sometimes they are not quick enough, though: depending on Metamorph's actions and the degree of local xenophobia and superstition, discovery may result in the Metamorph being tortured and executed on religious grounds, or dissected in the name of science.

In the Imperium, only the Imperial Intelligence Directive and VegaPol, and possibly the TARA agents of the Dia Khovaria, are aware of the true nature of the Metamorphs, but it is also likely that other agencies are aware of Metamorphs, though probably not to the same extent. VegaPol has a very small office devoted to hunting down rogue Metamorphs, especially those who attempt to brain-bore and impersonate ranking financial or political leaders. VegaPol's prime target is the mysterious Cult of the Chosen Ones, and it attempts to root out and destroy its sinister Temples of Experience whenever possible.

Metamorphs who are captured by the authorities may be executed without trial. However, those who are not hardened Cultists are often "volunteered" to join government intelligence organizations in lieu of receiving a death sentence. The Imperial Intelligence Directorate and VegaPol employ a few Metamorph agents. VegaPol's "tame" Metamorphs are supposed to rely on their shape-shifting powers and highly trained police skills, and some are bitter foes of the Cult of the Chosen Ones, blaming them for giving the entire Metamorph race an evil name. On the other hand, the IID's Metamorph agents are utterly ruthless, and will not hesitate to use their brain-bore ability when circumstances warrant — or even when they do not, and many still retain covert connections with the Cult. There is little love lost between Metamorph operatives of the two organizations!

9.5
ADVENTURE SUGGESTIONS

A friend of one of the PCs has vanished somewhere in the city. The characters investigate, and soon find out that their missing person is part of a string of mysterious disappearances that have recently occurred, baffling the local police.

The party is visited by "Kelly," a scared teenager who says she is on the run from a weird cult who wants to brainwash or kill her. She learned of the party when she was imprisoned with their missing friend. Sobbing, Kelly tells them how the party's friend was sacrificed by the cult. She would have been next, but escaped during the ritual, but now the cult will stop at nothing to track her down and kill her. Will the PCs help her and avenge their friend's death?

Kelly can tell the party where to find the cult and how to get into their temple. Other than that they are ruthless fanatics, she can't tell them much about its goals, just that she caught mention of Sianetic Harbinger artifacts.

Kelly's story may touch the adventurers enough to go after the nameless cultists, but the scared street-waif is not all that she seems. Even though the party have never met her before, their is something strangely familiar about her. Her manner of dress, speech, the expressions she uses are strangely like the group's dead friend!

What actually happened was that the party's friend was kidnapped by the Cult of the Chosen Ones. Kelly is a Metamorph who was tricked into joining the cult and starved until she gave in and used the brain-bore on the party's friend. But her will was strong enough to avoid addiction, and Kelly escaped the Cult before they could find another victim for her. Now she wants to use the party to shut down the cult, both to protect herself, and also to clear her troubled conscience.

9.6
SYSTEM NOTES

Use the *Alien Statistics Table* to generate Metamorph characters. Metamorphs should be limited to the following professions: Astronauts, Field Scientists (especially Criminologists), Communicators or Telepaths.

The time required for a Metamorph to use its shapeshifting powers are summarized below:

Change facial bone structure: 30 seconds.
Change skin texture: 10 seconds.
Alter pelvic or limb structure: 10 seconds.
Alter apparent height: 60 seconds.
Alter apparent mass: 20 seconds.
Inflate or deflate breasts: 20 seconds.
Gain real muscle or functional breasts: 20 hours.
Change eye, hair or skin color: 10 hours.
Grow body, head or facial hair: 10 hours.

Metamorphs who imitate specific people should have to use the Disguise skill to get it right, otherwise they will have done something wrong and their body will have some subtle flaw that prevents it from being an exact duplicate. More difficult Acting rolls will be required to fool people who knew the Metamorph, but all Metamorphs receive +40 to Acting rolls because of their abilities, or +80 if they have used a brain-bore on the original to absorb his or her personality and memories.

Although a Metamorph posing as a specific person may make a slip that results in suspicion, detecting a fully shape-shifted Metamorph *as a Metamorph* is impossible without an actual medical examination. But remember that a Metamorph cannot alter mass: by lifting up a Metamorph that is using its internal air sacs to seem to weigh more than its looks, one can quickly realize that something fishy is going on.

METAMORPH PCS

Metamorphs are somewhat powerful for use as PCs. However, a player can be allowed to run a young Metamorph, if the GM emphasizes the "hunted" nature of the race, discouraging the player from flaunting the character's abilities. Humans generally react with fear and hostility to Metamorphs, whether they belong to the Cult of the Chosen Ones or not, and any PC revealed as a Metamorph may face a lynch mob. Any Metamorph who joins the Cult will be ruthlessly hunted down by agents of VegaPol, while any one who doesn't will be actively targeted by the Cult itself. There is some safety in working for a government agency, but even a Metamorph working for the Imperium will be closely watched, and distrusted by its fellow agents and superiors.

The addictive nature of the brain-bore is treated as a drug with an Addiction Factor of 50: check each time a Metamorph character uses it. Addiction should be something PCs strive to avoid, and the GM can enforce this by periodically taking over any PC who is addicted and running the character as an NPC to simulate the terrible craving and loss of self control that accompanies any form of drug addiction. It should be possible for Metamorphs to recover from addiction, but this should require both a deliberate effort of will and the help of friends, and may require the character to be physically restrained. A recovering brain-addict will be at -30 for at least two months due to chills, shakes, and other side effects of going "cold turkey."

10.0
M'SIA

Eight meter long worms whose circular maws are surrounded by three manipulative tentacles, the far travelling, philosophical M'sia are known as missionaries and traders without an trace of xenophobia. A race of gentle pacifists, the M'sia often get into situations they can't handle, partly due to their tendency to meddle in other races affairs. Fortunately, their great size intimidates many potential foes a M'sia scout ship looks like a human dreadnought!

The M'sia evolved from swamp-dwelling amphibious omnivores. Sometime in their prehistory, they changed from being primarily water-dwellers to being predominantly land-dwellers, possibly in response to some ecological catastrophe that afflicted their environment. This sudden shift of focus provided the stimulus for development of intelligence, agriculture, and finally a technological culture which reached the stars many thousands of years before humanity.

10.1
APPEARANCE AND PHYSIOLOGY

The M'sia have narrow wormlike bodies about seven to nine meters long and half a meter thick, terminating in a fearsome circular maw edged with blunt bone ridges that serve it as teeth. On either side of the mouth are three recessed nacelles housing large eyes. Also spaced around the mouth are three manipulative tentacles, dexterous enough to serve as hands. These mouth-tentacles are two meters long, and are about twice as strong as a human's arm.

A M'sia's skin is smooth and colored mauve or deep purple. On its neck just before the mouth are four gill-slits: M'sia are amphibious and can breathe both air and water with equal facility. The M'sia biochemistry is protein based, but uses a different set of amino acids then those utilized by Earthly life. Thus, although the M'sia do not use nucleic acids (DNA and RNA) they possess analogues that perform similar functions.

The race communicates vocally, supplementing speech by using tentacles to gesture and make points. M'sia eyesight is sensitive in the low infrared spectrum, but they perceive blue and violet as black. They are far-sighted, and do not focus on near objects very clearly: at close ranges, M'sia use touch rather than sight. Their mouth tentacles are extremely sensitive tactile receptors; good enough that with practice a M'sia could use them to read print in a book. Each tentacle's tip is also lined with extraordinarily sensitive taste buds. M'sia hearing is slightly inferior to a human in a standard atmosphere, but

adequate on their homeworld. Their sense of smell is roughly similar to mankind's.

M'sia have two sexes, but the difference is not readily apparent to a human. Females lay transparent egg-clusters in underwater spawning pools, which are then fertilized separately by secretions from the males. Most eggs die, but a small percentage will develop underwater into tadpole-like embryonic M'sia, known as "little swimmers." After a year or more in the pools, the little swimmers will have develop the lung-structures and thickness of body necessary to survive on land, and will crawl out of the pools to become M'sia children. A M'sia child matures after 30 earth-years. The average life span is 500 years.

DIET

M'sia eat a mixture of plants and small rodent-like animals, although many are ethical vegetarians. Their mouths and gullets were designed for sifting through sand and dirt in search of food. M'sia like a bit of roughage (e.g., a few pebbles) with their breakfast or lunch to aid digestion.

Due to their large size, they must eat approximately four times as much as a human would. They can digest some of the same foods as humans do, but many substances that would nourish a M'sia would be poisonous to a human: a good biology text is useful when a M'sia eats on a human world, and vice versa.

FAVORED ECOSYSTEM

The M'sia homeworld, Life Bearer, is a planet of high gravity (1.7 Gs) and average temperature, and so the M'sia are most comfortable in similar conditions. They breathe a thick oxygen-nitrogen mix with a faint taint of sulphur and methane at an air pressure of 1.5 atmospheres. M'sia can breath a standard Terran atmosphere without too much difficulty, but they complain about the bland smell and are likely to become fatigued with any rapid exertion. M'sia sleep once in 30 hours for 10 hours at a time.

They move over land by crawling, and swim through water in the same way as eels. Although their world has a variety of ecosystems, the M'sia evolved in marshes and swamps and are most comfortable in a wet, humid environment. Primitive M'sia spent much time in bottom ooze of shallow lakes and migrating to swampy wetlands as the lakes and streams dried up during their world's long, arid summers.

10.2
LANGUAGE

All M'sia languages involve complex, hooting calls mixed with seemingly random booming drumbeats. A conversation sounds like a horn symphony accompanied by a drunken military drummer.

As a result, the M'sia language cannot be "spoken" by a non-M'sia without a specially programmed translator or a good synthesizer. However, a human (especially one with musical training) can learn to understand it without too much difficulty.

M'sia writing is three-dimensional, similar to Braille. It can be learned by humans, but doing so is very difficult.

NAMES

M'sia names are summary descriptions of the owner's physical appearance, profession and current place of residence, and are subject to change as the name-bearer changes. A M'sia name might translate as Sleek Bellied Long Body with Mottled Triangle Markings Who Seeks To Understand the Nature of Human-Robot Psychology at the Five Mountains Commune.

For obvious reasons, M'sia who choose to live or work among humans are usually compelled by their co-workers to adopt short-form "nick names." Since many M'sia are scientists, these are often prefaced with a scholarly local title, for example, Dr. Sleek Mountain.

10.3
PSYCHOLOGY

The M'sia were at the top of the food chain in their own ecosystem. Because of this, they were never forced to defend themselves against hostile predators, and as a result are much less aggressive then *humans*.

When dealing with others, M'sia caution is proverbial. They do not like to make important decisions or even offer advice until they can obtain the maximum amount of information. They feel strong emotions, but have remarkable control: a M'sia never says anything it does not mean, and never gets angry or flustered. Even with a *translator, M'sia speech is careful and measured*, without a word out of place.

To quote a M'sia proverb: "A problem must be fully tasted before its solution can be savoured."

The M'sia have a passion for art and culture. Almost every M'sia is skilled at some artistic pursuit. Their own tradition is as deep and *varied as humanity's. Human critics admire their works of prose and* poetry, which is close enough to mankind's to be understandable in translation. Other pursuits are more alien: for instance, they create "taste sculptures," works of confectionery genius, not always meant to be eaten. The subtle emotion-conveying flavors tell a story that can only be fully appreciated by the tongue of another M'sia.

M'sia are terribly curious. They are also busy-bodies. M'sia would make good journalists if they could be more objective. As it is, this highly empathic race can't resist helping underdogs. This can often lead them into conflict with powerful corporations or governments. Almost any organized protest against violation of "human" rights or environmental destruction will attract M'sia. They may not be in the front lines, but they will be raising funds, giving eloquent interviews, orchestrating strategy, filming artistic propaganda videos and writing powerful, moving press releases. Despite their penchant for behind-the-scenes action, they are not cowards: a M'sia will face death or torture at the hands of brutal security police as bravely as any human.

But despite their courage, the race is useless as fighters. They will not directly injure another sentient being, and are reluctant to support others who use violence, even if it is in a "good" cause. If possible they will try to prevent those they have an influence on from excessive violence. They are realists, however, and will try make their persuasion effective by offering alternatives that are more attractive than use of brute force. If confronted with violence they will attempt to turn an attacker's force against himself, whether it takes public opinion, or *even martial arts*.

Their pacifism does not always extend to non-sentients. There are some animal-rights or vegetarian advocates among them, but most M'sia have no compunctions about killing an animal in self defense or for food, though they will not let animals suffer unnecessarily.

10.4
SOCIAL STRUCTURE

M'sia procreate casually, depositing eggs in communal spawning pools and fertilizing them more as a matter of instinct and duty then passion. They are protective of the pools, but otherwise ignore their "little swimmers" until they leave the water-breathing stage. They do not have families; instead, their society revolves around village-sized communes. Each commune is largely self-supporting, with its own robotic factories and farms, spawning pools and educational centers, religious shrines and fusion plants, all centered around the local university.

Most members of a particular commune were not born there; it is common practice for young M'sia to travel to another commune after achieving maturity. Commune populations are deliberately designed to reflect a diversity of professional and philosophical viewpoints, and some have careful selection tests to ensure that applicants will fit in. Communes rarely have populations in excess of two thousand, and a M'sia is expected to know personally every member of its commune. Group activities (e.g., religious and philosophical discussions, education of children, and art shows) are organized to reinforce communal values. Each commune functions like a private corporation cum university college. Although private enterprise and money exist in M'sia society, it is communes rather than individuals or governments that own the means of production, and which engage in interstellar trade and commerce. Almost all trading, missionary, and exploration *ships are owned by communes rather than their captains*.

M'sia society has remained relatively static for the last two thousand years. Life is idyllic, with robots performing most chores, leaving the population free for whatever intellectual or artistic pursuits they care to indulge in. Those M'sia who seek adventure almost always choose to leave their homeworld, often first tasting the outside *world as part of the elyntha, a combination wanderjahr and rite of* passage that most young M'sia indulge in when they reach their twentieth year.

RELIGION AND MYSTICISM

M'sia are fascinated by other race's ethical and philosophical systems and religions. Open minded though not uncritical, they adopt (some might say *collect* is a better term) the greatest saints and prophets of other races into their own loose pacifist polytheistic religion. Statues of Buddha stand alongside alien gods in M'sia shrines, and the Bible and Koran are just as venerated (if somewhat strangely interpreted) among the M'sia as among human believers.

M'sia religions weave the diverse stands of their multiple faiths into a single tapestry, and preach a gospel of universal toleration and peace. They are gentle about their faith: they win converts by teaching seminars on comparative religion. They respect other's religions, but delight in pointing out parallels and shared themes that demonstrates their vision of Universal Truth.

10.5
POLITICAL STRUCTURE

A political superstructure beyond the commune is provided by a complex system of scientific/technical/artistic/academic guilds, each of which are a cross between a computer bulletin board, professional union, and political party. Members of each Guild live in every commune. The Guilds debate policy and vote through a computerized form of Athenian democracy.

Executive power over matters of planetary significance alternates between guilds every twenty planetary years (each of about 700 earth-days). Thus, one year the senior executive might be chosen from the Plumbers Guild, next time from the Sonic Sculptors, and the following election drawn from the Gas Giant Physics Institute. In addition, an extensive cybernetic datanet, "the Data Pool," acts as a computerized bureaucracy which provides administrative continuity and handles much of the daily business of government.

M'sia politics are always noisy, but although egos are sometimes bruised and reputations tarnished, they are only occasionally bitter, and violence is unheard of.

INTERSTELLAR RELATIONS

The M'sia homeworld is a member of the Imperium. Despite their relatively low population, the M'sia are accorded Minor House status as a result of their age-old culture and technology. Although Imperial officials are sometimes frustrated at the M'sia attitudes toward "justified" war and oppression, they tolerate the M'sia because of the scientific contributions they bring to the Empire and the propaganda value of having an Elder Race associated with the Imperium.

Many M'sia have left their homeworld to live on other planets or journey amid the stars. Some have settled on human or other alien worlds, where they earn their livelihood as artists, political activists, art consultants, museum directors, scientists, advertising executives or religious leaders.

MILITARY AND POLICE

The M'sia have no military. The closest thing to police forces are the few hundred operatives (mostly robots) of the Guild of Psychology, who locate and treat the very few M'sia who develop dangerous mental illnesses. As members of the Imperium, the M'sia rely on the Imperial Starmadas for protection against pirates, slavers and foreign powers.

The Imperium maintains a naval base on Life Bearer's second moon, and a VegaPol office on the planet's main starport to deal with off-world criminals who may visit the planet.

A very few M'sia have joined Imperial police or military agencies as special (often civilian) advisors, usually in roles such as terrorist negotiator or psychological warfare experts. M'sia in these positions are highly skilled in destroying the enemies' will to resist through carefully planned economic warfare, propaganda, and non-violent dirty tricks.

INSTITUTE OF ETHICAL SOLUTIONS

This hallowed institute is the closest thing to a justice system in the M'sia culture. The Institute arbitrates disputes between the M'sia guilds and communes, and (for a fee) will settle conflicts between individuals. Institute members must pass rigorous examinations training them in impartiality, fairness, justice, psychology, ethics, and philosophy.

A few departments of the Institute specialize in obscure (to the M'sia) fields such as criminology, contract-law, and alien legal systems.

Since the M'sia encountered starfaring aliens, the Institute has been active in volunteering its services to act as negotiators, arbitrators and intermediaries in interstellar and planetary conflicts, and has earned a justified (some would say notorious) reputation for scrupulous fairness and justice. Many Institute members have studied (and sometimes taught) law or philosophy on human and alien worlds.

THE GOD MAKERS

About sixty thousand years ago, the M'sia in the then-dominant Intelligence Crafters Guild became perturbed by the levels of violence shown among many primitive species, especially the various humanoid races scattered about by the Sianetic Harbingers. They decided that M'sia missionaries should visit primitive worlds. They would pretend to be "divine messengers" of whatever local religions (if any) existed, and would subtly twist the native faiths into conformity with M'sia philosophy.

Extensive use was made of androids crafted to resemble native gods, spirits, prophets or demons; starships were built with holographic systems that disguised them as angelic visitors. Weather control and seismic manipulation technology was used to provide special effects.

The God Maker project enjoyed some success, but also suffered several dramatic failures in which cultures were stunted or warped in unexpected ways. After 1,700 years, it was declared unethical by the Institute of Ethical Solutions, and ceased to be official M'sia policy. Nevertheless, there have been rumors that some M'sia communes with interests in missionary work and interstellar trade have continued to covertly pursue the God Maker program.

10.6
TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

The M'sia are an old, highly civilized race whose interests have turned away from technology to art and culture. They have possessed written records for close to six hundred thousand years, and hyperspace travel for fifty millennia. Even so, M'sia machines are only about as advanced as that of the Imperium, since they have had little interest in improving them.

M'sia produce excellent computer systems, and are good at designing simple and elegant electronic systems, fusion power plants, and robotic systems. In fact, M'sia industrial, scientific and household robots are a major export item.

M'sia vehicles are always anti-gravity flyers, and many are designed for underwater operations. Because of M'sia body size, even a two-M'sia ground car is the size of a human truck. M'sia have little interest in using vehicles for commuting within cities, preferring to walk or swim, but they *do* enjoy visiting friends in other communes, and as a result, most individuals own some form of personal flyer.

CURRENCY AND COMMERCE

M'sia are good traders, but have little interest in material goods or high technology beyond those needed to give them a comfortable living. Instead they seek cultural information and art objects. Some communes, however, have found they can finance their acquisitions by marketing high technology goods, and the result has been the spread of M'sia cybernetic systems throughout the Imperium.

As Imperial citizens, the M'sia have adopted the Imperial Elmonit, and use an identical system of electronic credit.

WEAPONRY

As they are pacifists, the M'sia will only fight to protect themselves with non-lethal weapons or defensive martial arts.

Since hostile natives and wildlife are a fact of interstellar voyaging, M'sia industries have produced an variety of non-lethal drugs, tanglesprays, psychochemicals, and shock and sonic weapons.

A very few M'sia serve in Imperial forces, usually in posts such as Intelligence Analysis, Psychological Warfare or Research and Development.

SPACESHIPS

M'sia spaceships are research vessels or exploration ships, sprinkled with a few traders and personal yachts. These days, most ships are human-built, but designed to match M'sia specifications. They tend to be fitted with fast hyperdrives, but are relatively slow in normal space. Compensating for this are advanced computer and scientific systems, and the best sensors that money can buy. They are never armed, but may have decent armor and screens, and superlative EW systems.

M'sia spacecraft are three to five times as large as an equivalent sized human vessel, because life support and crew quarters for M'sia take up four times the space of human ships. They tend towards a spherical or flattened sphere "flying saucer" shape. Most craft are designed for four to a dozen M'sia, but a fair number are built to carry only a solitary M'sia, although they may have a crew of robots.

A M'sia ship's interior fittings are similar to those of their buildings (see *Housing and Cities*, below). M'sia like water, but flooding a starship is expensive. Instead, ships simply maintain a very dense, high humidity atmosphere — humans who have boarded M'sia vessels have complained of walking through a sauna bath smelling of rotten eggs. On ship, M'sia bathrooms are just that: the entire room floods with water!

10.7
HOMEWORLD

The M'sia homeworld, *Life Bearer*, is 30,000 km in diameter, with 1.7 G gravity field. The air is a standard oxygen-nitrogen mix at 1.5 atmospheres surface pressure. The fourth planet of a yellow-white F9 star, Life Bearer is a hot, wet, humid globe covered with large shallow seas dotted with small and medium-sized islands. The largest major land mass is about the size of Australia; there are no large continental land masses. The atmosphere is high in sulphur and methane due to the many volcanoes and swamps, and smells like burnt rotten eggs to humans.

HOUSING AND CITIES

M'sia communes are small towns with populations of five to twenty five thousand individuals. Communes are arranged in spiral patterns, with public buildings and spawning pools in the center, surrounded by private dwellings, while the outer whorls of the spiral are dominated by robot-run farms and industrial complexes. From above a M'sia commune looks like an artfully landscaped Japanese garden, with carefully tended groves of alien trees and flowers, isolated grottos for meditation or holding lectures and cultural events, and many bathing pools and mud baths to relax in. Interspersed among the pools are low, circular domed buildings covered with flowering or luminescent creepers.

M'sia prefer to swim rather than walk, and so there are few commuters in the streets, and none of the jostling crowds that characterize Terran cities. Instead, most buildings have flooded basements with underwater tunnels. These connect to bathing pools and other building's basements, and M'sia use these for rapid transit, swimming back and forth. For obvious reasons, personal devices are designed to be waterproof!

Buildings are geodesic domes, with only one or two floors, connected by gently sloping ramps. Rooms are very large by human standards, and doors open like iris valves. There is little furniture. M'sia don't believe in chairs or beds, preferring to coil up on the ground, and most appliances (such as computer screens, or shelves) fold into the floor, ceiling, or walls. There are no windows as such: inner and outer walls are normally made of some translucent plastiglass, but each section can be made fully transparent with a hoot to the room computer.

M'sia prefer daylight to darkness, just like humans, but have even less interest in staying up late. At night, M'sia communes are dominated by swarms of robots, who tend the gardens, work in the fields, and maintain machinery. M'sia robots are functional many-tentacled designs, with dual underwater/land propulsion systems.

CLOTHING AND COSTUME

M'sia wear no clothing, but for protection against the elements they have developed "spray-on" pseudoplastic coatings. While remaining porous enough to enable their skin to "breathe," this prevents over-heating.

These *sprayform* garments are available in a wide variety of colors and textures, and can be dissolved by catalyst chemical sprays or ultrasonic baths. A single *sprayform* capsule weighs 0.1 kg and costs 20 Elmonits on a M'sia world, about ten times that off planet. Some humans visiting M'sia worlds have also worn them. The effect resembles a tight-fitting body stocking.

10.8
ADVENTURE SUGGESTIONS

While exploring or trading on the Imperial frontier, the party comes across an uncharted planet whose primitive humanoid inhabitants are ruled by a pantheon of living gods with exotic, seemingly magical powers. Unfortunately, the gods regard the PCs as interlopers, calling the party "Minions of the Worm." Using their abilities, which include lightning bolts, storms, and earthquakes, they succeed in disabling the party's ship, forcing the characters to flee into the wilderness or disguise themselves as natives.

While on the run, the PCs encounter the Cult of the Worm, a heretical resistance organization who oppose the gods, calling them "false creatures." After some hair raising adventures with the Worm Cultists, the party will be introduced to their leader — who turns out to be a M'sia: Dr. Tendril, from the Institute of Ethical Solutions.

If the PCs haven't already figured it out, Dr. Tendril tells the party that the gods here are actually sophisticated androids, their powers the result of ancient M'sia technology, placed here by the deluded God Makers thousands of years ago to guide the people into a utopian society. Dr. Tendril explains to the party about the God Maker project, which he calls a "terrible, terrible mistake." But even though the Institute for Ethical Solutions shut down the God Makers long ago, many records were misfiled or destroyed and not all worlds where the project had been initiated were properly investigated. Recently a graduate student researching her thesis turned up references to this planet, and the Institute sent Dr. Tendril to check it out, and if things were still going on, to shut down the experiment and put things to rights.

Dr. Tendril was armed with the robot's control codes, but unfortunately, the Androids no longer obey them: abandoned by their creators for thousands of years, their once benevolent programming has been twisted into a sinister perpetuation of their "divine" rule.

Although Dr. Tendril has so far managed to convince a small party of the natives that the gods are false, so far the cunning and powerful androids and their bag of "special effects" have proven too much for him. Perhaps the party could care to help?

10.9
SYSTEM NOTES

Use the normal rules to create M'sia characters, using the *Alien Statistic Table* to generate their characteristics. M'sia PCs are perfectly possible just remember to play them as pacifists. Characters may be any profession *except* Armsman or Arms Tech, but Communicators and Research Scientists will be the most common.

When a M'sia suffers a Critical, keep the extra damage the same, but adjust the results to fit the race's physiology: arm hits become damage to tentacles, for instance, while leg hits will affect the body instead.

M'sia can attack physically: treat their tentacles as arms, with a +20 bonus to any Grappling attacks. Although their huge mouths are impressive, no M'sia would ever bite another being.

SHAI-EN-RIN

No one knows where the Shai-en-Rin came from, for neither homeworlds nor colonies of theirs have ever been discovered. Perhaps they originated from outside our galaxy. But wherever they came from, these strange alien spacecraft are the UFOs of interstellar space: inexplicable, terrifying and powerful. Each Shai-en-Rin vessel is a unique encounter, for over the millennia each has "evolved" independently, altering its programming and rebuilding itself by grafting on newly encountered technology.

11.1
PHYSIOLOGY AND APPEARANCE

No one has ever seen a living Shai-en-Rin. Humans who have been on board their ships report that they have android and robot crews, but that the androids seemed to share a single consciousness. So far, the best explanation has been that there are no living organisms on board a Shai-en-Rin vessel — all Shai-en-Rin ships are run by artificial intelligence.

Shai-en-Rin spacecraft are quite small for their capabilities. The vessels are never larger than 10,000 tons, and most are around 5,000 tons displacement. The Shai-en-Rin vessels are great silver teardrops, their smooth surfaces broken by a single belt of what appear to be antennae. But few people have actually seen a Shai-en-Rin ship. The reason for this is that the vessels are equipped with a highly sophisticated electronic camouflage system — an array of countless fiberoptic light-guides which cover the ship's surface. Light that strikes the vessel's skin will pass through the guides and be bent through the optical cables until it emerges on the corresponding spot on the other side of it. This effectively renders the vessel invisible to normal eyesight and to televisual sighting techniques — very useful if the ship's sophisticated electronic jammers have already made electronic detection impossible.

The exact capabilities of Shai-en-Rin ships are unknown. They seem to be heavily armored, their hulls covered with a thin layer of degenerate matter many times stronger than crysteel. This gives them protective capabilities similar to those of Imperial dreadnoughts. Their force screens and EW systems are also highly sophisticated, and have resisted attack from much larger warships. However, they are not impenetrable. An Imperial Dreadnought that engaged a Shai-en-Rin vessel reported seriously damaging it before the alien ship entered a hypershunt and escaped.

Their defenses are as nothing compared to their drive and power systems. Scanner readings of Shai-en-Rin craft have shown that they are powered by paired rotating miniature black holes, which function as total mass-energy converters. The mini black holes may also function as a vital component in their hyperdrive systems, which are far faster than any known human or alien craft.

The Shai-en-Rin are not living creatures, but they can think, reproduce and evolve. All Shai-en-Rin ships contain robot manufacturing systems that enable them to build copies of themselves — sometimes copies that are better than the original, for the Shai-en-Rin do not hesitate to incorporate new ideas and technologies that they may have encountered.

Shai-en-Rin ships will usually gain spare parts necessary for reproduction by capturing and dismantling the starships of other races, then establish a temporary base on a metal-rich moon or asteroid to actually build the new vessel, using a swarm of small robots, and occasionally captured human or alien "puppets" fitted with mind control implants.

11.2
LANGUAGE

Shai-en-Rin androids, robots, and computers use their own computer language, which has yet to be cracked by Imperial computer programmers, perhaps because it is constantly evolving. They can also translate almost any other language (including computer languages) in a matter of hours. Shai-en-Rin ships encountered in the vicinity of the Imperium will usually have on-line translation programs for Standard. Infiltration androids are usually programmed with the major and minor languages of whatever solar system they are visiting.

NAMES

Shai-en-Rin was the phonetic translation of a signal broadcast by the first "confirmed" probe to be encountered by the Imperium. No one is exactly certain if it was a racial name, call sign, ship designation, or simply garbled static, but the name has stuck for the "species."

Shai-en-Rin ships have never communicated with anyone. Their infiltration androids have employed human and alien speech to lure people onto their ships or to order captives to surrender, but they have never revealed anything about the Shai-en-Rin or their supposed makers, and have simply refused to answer questions.

FAVORED ECOSYSTEM

The Shai-en-Rin spacecraft are capable of atmospheric reentry and takeoff on all types of planets, apparently regardless of the surface gravity. They have been known to operate underwater. Fragmentary reports from the Sheol indicate that Shai-en-Rin vessels have penetrated deep into the atmospheres of gas giants, which suggests their ships' armor or shields are capable of withstanding enormous pressures.

People taken aboard their ships report breathable air, a comfortable temperature and normal gravity. Since some visitors have come from races who require radically different atmospheres and gravity fields, it is obvious that the Shai-en-Rin can alter their ship's internal environment to match the preferences of their guests or captives.

11.3
PSYCHOLOGY

While they have sometimes engaged in peaceful communication, just as often these self-replicating robot probes and their crews of robot and android constructs have seized and dismembered vessels, kidnapped individuals as specimens or seeded entire worlds with alien organisms, altering planetary ecologies into new patterns that may be wonderful or horrible. The Shai-en-Rin can save worlds or destroy them. To call them enigmatic is an understatement. Their manifestations cannot be predicted or explained. To give an idea of what the Shai-en-Rin are capable of it is easiest to detail some of the most recent encounters that humanity has had with them.

Elysium was a beautiful garden planet, a second Eden, with green forests and placid seas, and no life forms more hostile than a house cat. Settled by an industrious religious sect, its people were quietly building a peaceful, prosperous society when a single ship of the Shai-en-Rin arrived. As the populace of Elysium watched in helpless horror, it seeded the planet with genetic viruses that mutated the harmless native life into horrible man-eating monsters. In a matter of weeks, Elysium was transformed into one of the most deadly planets in the known galaxy. Some of the inhabitants survived long enough to be evacuated by the Imperium, and a hardy few refused to leave their homes, and still live on their planet as heavily armed survivalists. But they don't call it Elysium now: they call it Hell.

Another time, a Shai-en-Rin starship landed on a Backnet world called Second Chance. The alien ship slaughtered the defending space force, then disgorged android soldiers to round up the frightened populace. Every one of the million men, women and children of Second Chance received an electronic brain implant, after which the aliens left. These Puppetmaster implants forced the entire population to journey into the planet's wastelands and arrange themselves into geometric patterns. Most remained in place until they died of thirst and exposure.

One alien ship arrived at Osiris, a human planet recently conquered by the Tezcat. The Tezcat garrison were regressed to infancy by a genetic virus, their human subjects left unharmed. But two weeks later, the Shai-en-Rin returned to Osiris, sewing Singularity Seeds that turned the planet's stable G2 sun into a brief nova. The entire solar system was sterilized to bedrock, the newly liberated humans incinerated along with their former masters.

The Shai-en-Rin's actions are not uniformly hostile: there is a story told about a world whose peoples had splintered into armed factions on the brink of nuclear war. Threats were made, ultimatums exchanged, and finally the missiles flew. But just before the warheads detonated, two great silver ships appeared in polar orbit. The missiles failed to explode, somehow nullified. The ships hung over the world for two weeks, shrugging off all attacks from both sides as casually as they had prevented the planet's nuclear armageddon, until shamed, the warring politicians made peace and the ships went away.

Another time, a newly founded human colony world was struggling with a infestation of disgusting winged rodents who ravenously devoured their crops and bred like rabbits. The colony teetered on the brink of starvation. Then the great silver ships came, seeding the world with giant mutant spiders. The Shai-en-Rin's creations devoured the winged rodents and then neatly died, leaving the planet's cities covered with beautiful gossamer webs. The crops were saved and the colony survived.

Some have suggested that there are two factions of Shai-en-Rin, one malevolent, another hostile. But no one has ever seen a Shai-en-Rin ship oppose another of its kind. And whether they are angels or devils, no one feels safe around them. The Shai-en-Rin appeared over a uninhabitable world with a poisonous atmosphere. Over a period of weeks, the ships terraformed it into beautiful garden planet. It is a world perfect for human habitation, but few live there, for fear that the silver ships will return.

Shai-en-Rin vessels do not just alter worlds and destroy stars, but they also act on an individual level. Human spaceships have been captured and "eaten" by Shai-en-Rin vessels, dismantled to provide parts that can be used to construct new spacecraft. There are stories of shipwrecked astronauts found drifting in space being rescued Shai-en-Rin vessels and dropped off near friendly starbases. Sometimes ships are stopped and boarded by robot probes who drag one or all of the passengers or crew onto the Shai-en-Rin vessel, ruthlessly destroying any individuals who resist them. Others describe being abducted from their home planets — lured to a deserted area by android beings that resemble humans, then taken aboard a giant invisible spaceship.

What happens to these abductees? Some have never returned. Others have been found on different planets of other solar systems, totally unharmed, telling of a dreamlike journey in a strange spacecraft where space and time seemed oddly distorted. A few report being subjected to examinations, strange tests, or weird experiments, or fitted with "puppetmaster" implants and forced to help build or repair Shai-en-Rin ships, often by dismantling captured human vessels. Many don't remember a thing.

Some female abductees have returned pregnant: those who carried their children found that their offspring appeared normal, but later exhibited great psionic powers. In one baffling case, nearly perfect android duplicates of a man who was taken from a trading vessel were found, scattered among a dozen different worlds. Each android believed itself to be the original, but the real person was never found.

Why do they do the Shai-en-Rin do what they do? No one knows for sure. Some scientists have theorized that it is all part of a grand plan to use the milky way galaxy as a gigantic experimental laboratory. Another favored explanation is that they are preparing the galaxy for the coming of a coalition of alien races, testing our capabilities and designing environments that will suit their masters. Many believe the Shai-en-Rin's builders to be long dead, with their machines out of control, exceeding their creator's intentions. A few consider the Shai-en-Rin to be the present form of the legendary Sianetic Harbingers, driven to strange excess in the senile madness of their old age.

11.4 ▮
SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The Shai-en-Rin seem to have no social structure. Telepaths have tried to probe vessels, but report making no contact. The best conclusion is that each ship is controlled by a single computerized artificial intelligence, or possibly many AIs linked in tandem.

Shai-en-Rin ships are generally solitary. But every so often, two ships will get together, cooperating in some major project. A few humans who have been aboard vessels tell of ships passing close together, using teleportation platforms to transfer spare parts or even human prisoners between them.

RELIGION AND WORSHIP

No one knows if the Shai-en-Rin are religious, although several human, Evantha and Lithkind cults have been formed by people who believe them to be instruments of higher powers. According to this interpretation, the Shai-en-Rin should be seen as angelic beings who pass arcane judgement on entire planetary civilizations, rewarding the worthy and punishing or destroying those who fail to meet their alien standards.

Most Shai-en-Rin cultists are harmless eccentrics, but some are dangerous fanatics who will hijack ships to get to Shai-en-Rin sites, perform random acts of terrorism in imitation of them, or even kidnap and sacrifice sentient beings in their honor.

11.5 ▮
POLITICAL STRUCTURE

No one seems to control the Shai-en-Rin as a "race" and there have never been any conflicts apparent between Shai-en-Rin vessels.

INTERSTELLAR RELATIONS

The Shai-en-Rin appear to behave with equal unpredictability to all races but the Avatar and Whirl-Kohl. No Shai-en-Rin ship has ever been reported to have ever harmed a member of these two races. Some individuals have attempted to communicate with the Shai-en-Rin using one of these races as intermediaries, but so far this effort has been unsuccessful.

The Imperium considers the Shai-en-Rin to be a deadly threat to peace and order in the realm. Standing orders require Imperial ships of the line to engage any Shai-en-Rin vessels they encounter. This has sometimes resulted in skirmishes, but usually the aliens leave when faced with overwhelming numbers or cruiser sized or larger warships.

But not always.

Recently a Shai-en-Rin vessel was engaged with an Imperial light cruiser, the *Black Moon*. The alien ship was losing the battle to *Black Moon* when it was suddenly joined by another Shai-en-Rin ship that popped out of hyperspace to even the odds. *Black Moon* was later found drifting free several light years away. Its entire crew were still aboard, their bodies totally drained of blood, their brains removed with surgical precision.

Since this encounter took place, Imperial captains have been somewhat less gung-ho about their "standing orders."

11.6 ▮
TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

Although the Shai-en-Rin can destroy entire solar systems, they are not unbeatable, and their capabilities seem to obey the laws of physics. Shai-en-Rin are masters of the arcane field known as "strange physics." Early research into strange physics by the Imperium yielded tachyon communications, the hypershunt, force shields, and gravitic technology. Imperial scientists have estimated that the Shai-en-Rin technology is about what Imperial technology could be like in five hundred or a thousand years.

WEAPONRY

Infiltration Androids and combat drones are armed with super-advanced personal weapons, such as Pocket Continuum Crackers and backpack Stasis Globes (see the *Artifacts* section). Shai-en-Rin spacecraft may possess extremely sophisticated weapon systems. The Shai-en-Rin have also employed living weapons, ranging from monstrous replicant creatures to genetic viruses that can alter the very DNA of living creatures, mutating them into strange forms, or subtly altering their brain chemistry.

COMMERCE AND CURRENCY

The Shai-en-Rin do not engage in any form of trade.

11.7 ▮
INSIDE THE SHAI-EN-RIN

As mentioned, a few humans and aliens have been inside Shai-en-Rin ships, and returned to tell about it. Shai-en-Rin vessels are a maze of wide hexagonal passages leading into large circular chambers filled with mysterious equipment. Walls are completely covered with florescent panels, and doors seem to be solid walls, but turn out to be holographic projections. Except for the androids and robots, all walls and machines in the vessel glows with a single monochromatic color — but that color changes at random intervals, from every few seconds to every few minutes.

No one has ever found any instrument panels; robots and androids appear to be in constant communication with whatever force controls the vessel. There are quarters for humans and for other alien races, which are plain but comfortable, and which include view screens that display images from outside the vessel. Food is delivered by androids, and appears to be composed of natural organic animal and plant protein.

Areas of the ship that visitors have been taken into include rooms filled with devices resembling medical function beds (*Tech Book*, p. 20). The robots made them lie down while they were subjected to thorough biological examinations by sensors and probes, which were mounted on segmented arms built into the chambers walls. Other visitors have reported passing through what appear to be gardens filled with alien plants, and others have entered rooms that held

stacked tank after tank of living creatures, some fully formed, others only fetuses. Most of the denizens of the tanks were alien animals, but a few were recognizable, and some people reported seeing glimpses of what looked like human forms. These chambers may be where the Shai-en-Rin breed the strange life forms they sometimes seed planets with, or may simply be experimental laboratories. All the animals in tanks seemed to be growing at accelerated rates, possibly using a variant on the alterant replication process used by Imperial genetic engineers.

11.8 ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪
ADVENTURE SUGGESTIONS

Characters may be visiting a planet when the Shai-en-Rin appear. This presents two possibilities. Either the characters can struggle to organize the local defenses to stop the silver ships (difficult, but possible) or they could be caught in the aftermath of whatever happens. The PCs may even be party of a government team assigned to deal with the problem. For instance, if the Shai-en-Rin began seeding the planet with strange and deadly life forms, the characters would have to decide whether these creatures were hostile or friendly, or possibly both — and if they were dangerous, how to stop the infestation overrunning the planet. GMs should strive to make the Shai-en-Rin strange and unpredictable, but remember that they are not omnipotent!

11.9 ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪
SYSTEM NOTES

There is no such thing as a "typical" Shai-en-Rin, since the ships are continually evolving, stealing technology from other races they encounter, and rebuilding themselves to adapt to new circumstances and dangers. A sample vessel might have the following statistics:

CLASS: Alien space probe
PRODUCER: Shai-en-Rin
TONNAGE/HITS: 5,000
COMPUTER Mk#: 100+
ARMOR TYPE: CAT 30 (-150)
DB BREAKDOWN: +70 EW, +80 Screens
REQUIRED CREW: None
PASSENGERS: 50 androids and robots
CARGO CAPACITY: 1,500 cumets
MAX SUBLIGHT ACCEL: 200 km/s/s
MANEUVERING THRUSTERS: 20 km/rnd
TRANSLIGHT DISPLACEMENT: 20 LY/day
OPERATING RANGE: Unknown
LANDING CAPABILITY: Yes
WEAPONRY: • 4 turret-mounted Mk 50 Anti-Proton Cannon
            • 4 fore-mounted Mk 20 M/A Torpedo tubes
            • 2 Singularity Seeds
            • 1 Entropic Neutralizer

Note on Weaponry: *Anti-proton cannon function as Blasters, but fire beams of anti-particles. They have a +20 bonus, and deliver double concussion hits. Furthermore, all target ship crew will suffer radiation criticals with a level one less than those inflicted on the target vessel. Singularity Seeds and Entropic Neutralizers are discussed in the Artifacts section.*

INVISIBILITY

Shai-en-Rin ships are protected by a fiber-optic invisibility system, but it is not totally infallible. Light waves are slightly distorted by the progress through the light guides covering the ship. Anyone looking *directly through an "invisible" Shai-en-Rin ship may notice* something is wrong. Objects on the other side seem blurred or out of focus, or upside down. Characters should get a Hard (-10) Perception roll to notice the ship when it is using its camouflage (roll once, using the highest Perception in the group). Success means the character doesn't see the ship, but does notice something is funny, e.g., "that bird seems to flying upside down!" The chance of noticing this should be reduced if there is nothing but sky or barren land or sea directly behind the spacecraft.

PROBES AND ANDROIDS

Shai-en-Rin ships carry a variety of robot and android constructs. For boarding and defending themselves against intruders, ships carry a dozen or so robots equivalents to ARC Scouts (*Tech Book*, p. 34), with repairs performed by a swarm of smaller bots similar to the TAR 412s (*Tech Book*, p. 33). However, all Shai-en-Rin robots are more advanced then their Imperial equivalents. In addition to listed capabilities, give them one or two exotic weapons or devices from the *Artifacts* section of the book; typically Negafield Projectors, Stasis Globes, or Continuum Crackers.

Shai-en-Rin infiltration androids are also similar to Imperial designs, but it should be noted that they will produce androids resembling nonhuman races as well as humans. Shai-en-Rin androids have AT 12 armor, and also possess "built-in" shield capabilities equivalent to a Barrier Shield. Being designed to infiltrate human or nonhuman planets, they are highly trained in covert operation-type skills.

SHEOL

The homeworld of the Sheol is a Jupiter-sized gas giant, the fourth planet of an orange K8 star. Sheol is an enormous world of turbulent winds, crushing pressure and boiling temperatures. But Sheol is not a lifeless world. Its atmosphere is 90 percent hydrogen, with the remaining ten percent primarily helium, with traces of methane, ammonia, water vapor, and sulphur. Stirred by the furious lightning storms that constantly rage within it, the atmosphere became a Promethean witches' brew that first produced complex organic compounds, then primitive life, and finally a complex floating ecosystem in which hydrogen breathing predators and prey coexisted among the drifting ammonia clouds.

Fierce inter-species competition led to the development of intelligence among two of its species. The turning point came when the giant Squid Mothers established a partnership with small but clever Messengers, seeking allies in a relentless war against native predators. Their relationship evolved into a strange form of aerial civilization in which the Messengers' "cities" and "factories" are the bodies of their larger partners and hosts.

12.1
APPEARANCE AND PHYSIOLOGY

The Squid Mothers and the Messengers are two distinct races who exist in a symbiotic relationship.

SQUID MOTHERS

A Squid Mother is a roughly spherical creature, 2 kilometers in diameter. Twenty feeding tentacles dangle from beneath this vast body, each one 1.2 km long and 30 meters wide. A Squid Mother has a coarse, ropy hide, covered in pock-marks, mouths, and gas vents. Beneath its skin is a complex series of intestinal passages, stomachs, valves and bladders. Much of the Squid Mother's interior is hollow, filled with hydrogen gas. Living hydrogen balloons, the Squid Mothers float serenely through the ammonia clouds, tentacles questing in search of living prey.

Squid Mothers can alter their internal chemical balances to create exotic compounds inside their own bodies. By careful control of this process, they can "wall off" one or more internal stomachs, creating a sealed laboratory wherein organic molecules can be combined to build complex living organisms.

Gas giants are drenched in radio energy. The Squid Mothers make use of this abundant energy source for communication and even to power biological processes. Their bodies function as natural short-wave radio antennae. A Squid Mother's external senses are electromagnetic (radar and radio hearing, with a range of up to 50 kilometers) and tactile, using their tentacles.

The Squid Mothers require the services of the Messengers to aid in reproduction. The relationship is akin to that between bees and flowers: the Messengers act as pollinators, carrying genetic material back and forth between different Squid Mothers. Squid Mothers can reproduce by themselves, but Messengers make the process far easier and more efficient.

When a Squid Mother has been "pollinated" it will begin producing offspring — dozens of round, tentacled Hungry Seeds that are scattered to live or die as chance takes them. A Hungry Seed is about 200 meters in diameter, and is a ravenous predator — one which has even been known to eat Sheol Messengers! After about fifty years of growth (having reached a size of 1 kilometer or so across) a Hungry Seed will develop its radio receptors to the extent that it can "listen in" on the transmissions of adult Squid Mothers and begin mimicking these sounds. When it finally "learns to talk," it will be answered by adult Squid Mothers, and it will soon attract a flock of Messengers of its own, joining Sheol society as an adult.

Adult Squid Mothers live for an estimated 800 years.

MESSENGERS

Messengers are a fully sentient race living in partnership with the giant Squid Mothers. Although in some ways subservient to the Squid Mothers, the Messengers are fully intelligent sentient beings in their own right. Because the Messengers are much closer to humans in size and outlook, it is they who are commonly entrusted with the responsibility of dealing directly with other races.

Sheol Messengers live inside the Squid Mother's body, nesting in stomachs and intestinal passages. In addition to their reproductive role, Messengers perform other valuable services for their larger partners, ridding them of internal pests and dangerous parasites, and acting as their "hands" when dealing with technology.

Human xenologists consider it likely that the Squid Mothers deliberately bred the present species of Messengers from less intelligent ancestors, perhaps beginning with a simple process of domestication in pre-historic times, and continuing until the present form of the species was developed. It is also apparent that this process continues: although the so-called *Adaptives* are the most often encountered race, several other sub-species of Messenger have been observed, some showing obvious signs of deliberate and sophisticated biological engineering.

A typical Messenger resembles a triangular flying wing, six meters wide and 75 centimeters thick. Their skin has a spongy consistency, resembling an exposed human intestine. Located centrally under their bodies are a nest of four arm-sized under tentacles, each three meters long, which they use to manipulate objects. The base of the triangle, the leading edge of the Messenger's wing contains a two meter-wide "mouth slit" surrounded by finger-sized tendrils. These mouth tendrils supplement the under-tentacles, functioning as taste-buds and as fingers to enabling the Messengers to perform delicate functions.

Messengers are eyeless. Instead of sight, they rely on other senses: taste and touch in their mouth tendrils, very acute hearing, and natural sonar that is as acute as a dolphin's. They also have a limited ability to sense and locate radio waves, although no power to broadcast or interpret them. Far inferior to that of the Squid Mothers, their radio sense enables them to home in on the Squid Mothers or any other radio beacons within twenty kilometers.

Sheol Messengers are scavengers, eating their Squid Mother's leavings, and nesting within its body to raise their young. Like the Squid Mothers, the Messengers use hydrogen bladders to support them, but they are far more maneuverable, riding convection currents and swooping or gliding like birds or bats. Inside the Mother, the Messengers can find shelter from Sheol's furious weather conditions that would otherwise scatter their flocks, much like aircraft riding out a storm beneath the decks of a carrier.

Unlike the Squid Mothers, the Messengers are bisexual, although only another Messenger would know the difference. Children are born alive, and live within the Squid Mother until they are old enough

to fly on their own. A Messenger can fly after two earth-years, and becomes sexually mature at age ten. It lives for an average of forty years.

DIET

Squid Mothers and their Hungry Seeds are carnivorous predators, while the Messengers are scavengers that feed upon their leavings. Nearly invisible in their natural pink, red and violet camouflage, the Squid Mothers are patient fishers, angling for passing flyers or floaters with their many kilometer-long tentacles.

When they catch their prey, a quick flurry of motion results in it being hauled up, torn apart, and the gobbets deposited in one of ten different open mouths in the Squid Mother's body. Any loose bits that fall free are quickly snatched out of the air by wheeling flocks of Messengers. The Messengers supplement their diet by eating the smaller pests and parasites that periodically attempt to infest the Squid Mothers.

FAVORED ECOSYSTEM

Both Sheol species dwell in the upper atmospheres of hydrogen-helium gas giants. They can tolerate temperatures between -50° and 150° C, and pressures between 2 and 20 atmospheres. A terrestrial environment is fatal to them.

When visiting earth-like worlds, Sheol Messengers travel in small Lifepods, which maintain gas-giant environments. Just large enough to hold one messenger and its life support system, a lifepod is fitted with air cushion or anti-grav propulsion system, and equipped with highly dexterous tentacle manipulators. Lifepods are heavily armored, since the high-pressure hydrogen gas within them would explode like a bomb if exposed to oxygen!

12.2 ▮

LANGUAGE

Squid Mothers communicate among themselves by high-speed radio transmissions, using a complex and subtle language.

Messenger speech consists of sonar pulses, and many of their "words" are in fact "sound pictures" that convey the sense of graphic images. In fact, Messengers appear to have at least three sonar languages, one of which is solely used for scientific and technical discourse.

A Squid Mother speaks to its Messengers through a *Facilitator*, a specially-bred Messenger sub-race. Facilitators are linked directly to the Squid Mother's nervous system, letting them translate the Squid Mother's thoughts into the Messenger language, and vice versa.

HUMAN-SHEOL COMMUNICATION

Direct conversation with either Sheol race is slow and difficult — the symbols and structure of their language appears to be constantly shifting, and shares few or no basic concepts with any known human or alien dialects. Any dialogue with Sheol requires access to a computer with a sophisticated Sheol Linguistics program plus a communicator modified to use Sheol radio or sonar frequencies. The character will have to make a successful Xeno-anthropology or Xeno-psychology roll. The difficulty is *Sheer Folly* unless the character is a Sheol specialist, in which case it is *Very Hard*. In any case, at least one hour of give and take is required to convey or understand even the most simple concepts; modified rolls of 05 or less result in bizarre misinterpretations.

To ease these problems, the Squid Mothers used their experience with the Facilitator sub-race of Messengers to create the *Interpreters*, a hybrid form produced from human DNA and Sheol biotechnology. Using the Interpreters, Humans can now speak in Standard to the

Interpreter, either in person or through a communicator. To speak to a Messenger rather than a Squid Mother, a human will address the Interpreter who tells the Squid Mother who instructs an Facilitator. Since the Facilitator and Interpreter are both linked by direct neural interface through the Squid Mother, the process is faster than it sounds.

Use of the Interpreters have not totally eliminated conceptual problems when dealing with the Sheol, but they have greatly speeded up communications. Although some people find the existence of the subhuman Interpreters offensive to human dignity, their creation opened the way for trade and diplomatic negotiations with the Sheol, and the development of such joint projects as Sheol Station.

12.3
PSYCHOLOGY

The strongest characteristic that human observers have noted in the Sheol is an insatiable drive to explore their environment. They have created radio telescopes, developed biological probes to investigate the lower depths of Sheol's atmosphere, and even expressed a desire to send Messengers to visit other worlds. They are fascinated by alien biochemistry, material science, physics, planetology and astronomy. They have much less interest in cultural matters, and appear to find human concepts such as "art" bizarre.

Where Sheol seem to differ most from humans is in their utter lack of any drive to compete with those of their own race. Fellow Sheol are never rivals or enemies, even for mates.

But at the same time, the Squid Mothers are not an especially communal species, and concepts such as friendship, affection or love do not translate at all. Squid Mothers possess a strong personal survival drive, and seem to care for their Messengers as useful tools. But they have no families, they do not physically mate, and regard propagation of their race as a simple instinct and education of the young as a casual duty.

The Messengers are a little more social, looking after their children, and working together as a group. But even they do not have any strong ties, either to specific Squid Mothers or to individual Messengers. Cooperation seems to be mostly fueled by a need to share technological or scientific information: Sheol find the idea of keeping secrets ridiculous, and love to spread news of original ideas and new discoveries.

By and large, the Sheol are more trusting then humanity, at least in their relationships with intelligent races. Their dealings with humans have been quite open, and no Sheol has ever refused to at least *try* to answer a question asked it by a human. This attitude may prevail because their only conflicts have been with non-sentient and semi-sentient species: their only experience of inter-racial relationships have been the peaceful symbiotic cooperation between Squid Mother and Messenger, and they expect their dealings with humanity and other aliens to be on the same basis.

Human conflicts baffle them. An Interpreter once rendered "hatred" and "revenge" as the "potential necessity to suppress/eat potentially harmful pests." Similarly, Sheol is near the Idorian border, and when the topic of warfare between the Imperium and the near-human Idorians came up, a Sheol concluded that the Idorians had become insane due to infestation by brain parasites: why else would they fight against their own species?

Nevertheless, Sheol ignorance of the concept of war should not be taken to indicate that the Sheol are harmless pacifists. The Sheol have fought relentlessly against the variety of deadly creatures that inhabit their gas giant ecosystem. Human Xeno-psychologists believe that were the Imperium to demonstrate hostility to the Sheol, we would be "reclassified" as a dangerous predator or parasite, fit only for extermination. In view of the Sheol's demonstrated capabilities for biological engineering and their general scientific aptitude, antagonizing them is not considered to be wise.

RELIGION AND MYSTICISM

Sheol religious beliefs, if any, remain vague. Messengers questioned on the subject find references to supreme intelligences perfectly reasonable, but claim not to know any beyond the Squid Mothers! When told such a being could be immaterial, eternal and all encompassing, the reply is "does it live in hyperspace?" So far, human missionaries have had little luck converting the heathen.

Theological discourse with the Squid Mothers have been even less informative, suggesting that the Squid Mothers are empiricists with little interest in abstract philosophy. However, some xenologists believe that their attempts to genetically manipulate the Messenger species could have been performed for reasons that were as much religious or mystical as practical.

12.4
SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The Sheol are two distinct races who live and work together, forming a single society. The basic social grouping is a single Squid Mother and its flock of Messengers. The Squid Mother provides food and shelter, and acts as a source of raw materials. The Squid Mothers can be said to "rule" the Messengers, but no Messenger is a subject of a particular Squid Mother, or feels any special loyalty to it. A major reason for this is the nature of gas giant life: with 500 kph winds and anti-cyclones the size of oceans, it's easy for a travelling Messenger to be carried off by an unusually potent storm and never find its siblings again!

Messengers retain no special ties with their parents; all within a Squid Mother form a single "family" group. Messengers joining a new group will have low-status until they can demonstrate their usefulness, but are otherwise fully accepted. Similarly, the concepts of wealth and personal property are meaningless to the Messengers: everything is owned by the Squid Mother, and resources are freely lent out to individuals as they need them.

There are many distinct Messenger subspecies, the result of biological engineering, each with its own particular role in Sheol society. A few of these sub-species are described below.

MESSENGER SUB-SPECIES

Adaptives are the type of Messenger most often encountered by humanity. They have flexible minds and highly dexterous tongue-tentacles. Coupled with an insatiable curiosity, this makes them the scouts, technicians, and scientists of Sheol society. Adaptives are highly innovative, and their interests sometimes extend to human affairs. They love to tinker with biological and technological devices, and happily dismantle anything they can get their hands on to see what makes it work, regardless of who it may belong to.

Facilitators are equipped with extended brain-capacity, visible in the convoluted ridges that run in zig-zag patterns across their upper surfaces. They are designed to act as interfaces between Squid Mothers and the Messengers, communicating with the Squid Mothers by direct neural linkage. When a Squid Mother wishes to achieve linkage, a fusion tendril uncoils from the wall-membrane of a coalescence chamber, piercing the Facilitator's skin near its major nerve juncture and transmitting signals directly into its brain. The Facilitator's body jerks like a puppet on a string, then goes slack, its mind becoming a living channel for dialogue between Messengers and Squid Mother. Due to the stress of linkage, a Facilitator can only

remain connected for about an hour — any longer puts it in risk of serious damage to its nervous system, making the use of relays of Facilitators a necessity.

Monitors are designed to deal with parasites and predators that threaten the Squid Mother. Their under-tentacles end in sharp spines which secrete a viral solvent (treat as a level 20 reduction poison) that can eat almost anything organic. They are always vigilant, and make aggressive and deadly fighters, but their intellectual and imaginative faculties are quite inferior to those of the Adaptives.

Spinners have round, bloated bodies, and spinnarets instead of mouth tendrils. They are builders, manufacturing a sticky paste in their bodies, then weaving filaments of it that harden after a few seconds into a resinous material resembling plastic. Spinners can build objects ranging from containers to spacecraft hulls, but they are not especially intelligent, and generally do what the Adaptives or Facilitators tell them to do.

Interpreters were created by adapting the structural forms of human DNA to produce humans capable of surviving neural linkage with the Squid Mothers. They resemble naked, blank featured humans, with under-developed, hairless bodies and empty, staring eyes. An umbilical cord connects them to a pulsing bulge on one of the Squid Mother's interior walls, and a modified fusion tendril pierces their body near the back of the neck. They are designed to communicate verbally with humans, translating human language and concepts for the Squid Mothers and Messengers, and vice versa. They retain their human intellect, although they are nearly devoid of personality. They are not viable on their own, and can only survive in environmental enclaves deep within the Squid Mother.

Among the Messengers, social status is based primarily on sub-species, with the stupid Spinners and the drone-like Facilitators and Interpreters having the least freedom and spending nearly all their time at work, eating or sleeping. In contrast, Adaptives spend about half their time carrying out the desires of the Squid Mothers, which may range from conveying genetic material to assisting in scientific problem-solving. During their free time, small groups of Adaptives will usually engage in their own scientific or technical projects, or just devote time to conversation, eating, mating or engaging in playful acrobatic flights. The Monitors sometimes join the Adaptives in physical exercises, but spend most of their free time engaging in martial play-fighting.

12.5
POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Sheol are not territorial or nationalistic. In fact, the only "territory" to speak of are the Squid Mothers, who are far more physically powerful then their inhabitants. Any form of agriculture or herding of livestock is likewise impossible due to the turbulent weather conditions. As a result, Sheol society tends toward anarchy, with leaders and groups formed for short term purposes, and disbanding or being replaced when that purpose is realized.

Squid Mothers sometimes arrange larger social groupings called *fairs*, with as many as fifty Squid Mothers and a thousand or more Messengers drifting in close formation, surrounded by a flock of several hundred busy Messengers. Fairs provide opportunities to trade information and technology, and allow Messengers to balance their populations, replacing losses due to storms, predators and parasites. Fairs are always temporary groupings, often interrupted prematurely by a sudden storm that scatters the participants. The Sheol consider the human-constructed Sheol Station to be a kind of permanent fair.

FIRST CONTACT

First contact with the Sheol was made by Dana Lee, Erin Gray and Mordra Khan, the crew of an Imperial heavy fighter called the *Hungry Shadow* serving with the Darranian 74th Fighter Group. While on a routine patrol sweep through the Sheol system, the ship was bounced near the gas giant Sheol IV by four Idorian fighters. Attempting to evade its attackers by diving into Sheol IV's atmosphere, the fighter suffered a missile hit and lost its main reactor. Unable to summon the energy to escape the planet's gravity well, *Hungry Shadow* began a slow glide to certain destruction.

But the ship's descent did not go unnoticed by the Sheol. Soon after a Squid Mother's radar detected it, *Hungry Shadow* was intercepted by a fair of a dozen Squid Mothers and nearly five hundred Messengers. The Sheol matched velocity with the slowly sinking vessel, combining their efforts to capture it in their tentacles. Believing the ship a mutant form of Squid Mother, a boarding party of Adaptives and Monitors were sent to investigate. Knowing the aliens to be their only hope, the three crew opened one cargo lock to Sheol conditions, and wore suits to meet them. The Messengers glided into the ship, then out again, to report what they had found. Minutes later, huge tentacles snaked aboard snatching the crew dragging them into the Squid Mother.

When Lt. Gray perished after being removed from her suit, the Sheol realized they were not dealing with beings similar to themselves. Her remains were analyzed, and the other captives were studied more carefully. Making a chemical analysis of leakage from the humans' suits, the Sheol came to the astonishing conclusions that these life forms breathed a poisonous oxygen-nitrogen mixture. With some effort, micro-organisms were developed that could break water and ammonia into their hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen constituents. In a surprisingly short time, the Sheol had created a small enclave capable of supporting terrestrial life, enabling their guests to survive without their suits, whose oxygen supplies had been nearly depleted.

Eventually both humans died. The Sheol lacked the ability to synthesize the proper nutrients for them. However, Dana Lee's death took nearly two Earth months, and by then the Squid Mothers were able to learn much of oxygen-based biochemistry. From the Sheol point of view, first contact had been wildly successful. Of course, the crew of the *Hungry Shadow* may have felt differently.

SECOND CONTACT

Using their experience of *Hungry Shadow's* radio frequencies, the Squid Mothers tinkered with the genetic structure of some of their Hungry Seeds, turning them into gigantic radio transmitters capable of piercing Sheol's atmosphere. They also begin experiments to clone the cell samples they had preserved of Dana Lee to produce the Interpreter sub-race. Although early experiments ended in non-viable spores and monsters, the Squid Mothers finally produced a human hybrid that could survive both neural linkage and live for more than a few months. They began to broadcast a message.

While performing a routine mapping sweep in the Sheol system, the Imperial exploration vessel *Chalkar Westridge* detected regular long-wave radio emissions from the vicinity of Sheol IV. As she monitored the signal, the sensor operator was surprised to realize that they were not coming from orbit, but from within the gas giant. After running a complex translation program, the ship's science officer discovered that the transmissions were in a mathematical code. Although horribly confusing, the basic content of the message was clear: it was the biological structure of human DNA and the genetic code of another, hydrogen breathing race.

Chalkar Westridge sent back the same message in answer. Humanity had finally established communications with the Sheol. The second face to face meeting between Sheol and Human took place one month later.

THE SHEOL SITUATION

After the Imperium learned of the fate of the *Hungry Shadow*, some Imperial leaders blamed the Sheol for the crew's deaths. Others took the more pragmatic approach that nothing could have saved them anyway: the Sheol tried their best. In any case, the more cynical diplomats were privately pleased that the Idorian torpedo attack within Sheol's atmosphere technically constituted Idorian aggression against the Sheol race, thus giving the Imperium formal cause to claim to be protecting the planet against off-world aggressors. The distinction might have been lost on the Sheol (and the Idorians), but they could impress some neutral powers.

At present, the Imperium has claimed the Sheol system as a protectorate, and maintains a large garrison in system, both to keep an eye on the gas giant dwellers and to prevent other powers (especially the near-by Idorians) gaining access to them. The Sheol are considered Imperial subjects, although no one has seriously suggested collecting taxes or placing an Imperial governor on Sheol IV!

The Imperium has maintained wary but friendly relations with the Sheol, licensing limited trade and technological exchange through House Jade-London. A few Messengers have visited human worlds, travelling in specially-equipped life support modules, and there has been talk of a joint human-Sheol program to build a spacecraft capable of containing a mutant form of Squid Mother.

12.6

TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

Squid Mothers can internally combine organic molecules to construct living organisms or complex chemical compounds. Given supplies of the necessary chemical elements, Squid Mothers are capable of rapid synthesis of large amounts of complex compounds, including many drugs and pharmaceuticals. They can even perform "biological engineering" within their own bodies, by creating microorganisms that can themselves alter the development of embryonic Hungry Seeds and Messengers, or even human beings.

Sheol biotechnology can produce everything from macroscopic artificial life to living pre-programmed molecular machinery. All but the simplest tools are actually specially-bred organisms. For instance, a Sheol surgeon works with genetically modified living creatures, using them to cut open the patient's body, maintain life support, and perform repairs. By modifying egg cells, the Sheol have performed genetic engineering on their own kind. "Replicant" and "Transhuman" Messengers and Squid Mothers exist. Even more exotic "artifacts" also exist, like the mutant Squid Mothers whose bodies were converted into living radio telescopes and biological probes designed to penetrate down to the liquid hydrogen "surface" of Sheol. The Sheol are known to have been working on a Squid Mother variant that can generate coherent radio-frequency electromagnetic radiation. It has been speculated that with human assistance, the Sheol could eventually develop "living starships" similar to those used by the Eed (*Tech Book*, p. 46).

Although the Sheol are expert bio-technicians, the lack of metals and solid minerals on their homeworld has limited them in other respects, and their physical science is less advanced than the Imperium. To build structures outside the confines of the Squid Mothers, the Sheol make use of crystalline icebergs, manipulating high-pressure water and ammonia in ways that are not fully understood by humans.

In effect, crystallurgy replaces metallurgy as the primary materials science. At present, the Sheol can produce a limited range of functional non-living tools, ranging hand tools to what appear to be simple electric motors.

SHEOL STATION

Since friendly contact was established, humanity and the Sheol have engaged in some joint technological ventures. So far the most impressive example of Sheol-Imperial cooperation has been the creation of Sheol Station.

Sheol Station is a heavily armored scientific and diplomatic outpost floating on anti-gravity thrusters within the upper levels of Sheol's atmosphere. Imperial construction robots and human workers in powered exoskeletons combined with Messengers and giant Squid Mothers to build it, while the station interior walls, bulkheads and even much of the furniture were formed with help from the Spinner caste, a process which gives the station interior a disturbingly organic look. Sheol Station has a permanent population of 800 specialists, with as many as two hundred visiting Messengers. The station is always the center of a "fair" of several Squid Mothers, and shuttle vehicles are used to carry human visitors back and forth.

Any ship with a sublight acceleration rating of 10 or more and AT 23 or better can dock with Sheol Station, although ships are advised not to attempt this during periods of exceptionally bad weather. The station is divided into Earth and Sheol environmental sections. Since mixing hydrogen and oxygen can prove explosive, careful precautions were taken to prevent accidents. These are not always successful: two years ago, an explosion caused by a faulty electrical circuit ripped through an environmental module, killing 29 humans and a dozen Messengers.

COMMERCE AND CURRENCY

The Sheol appear eager for trade, though the translation they use is "exchange of information" or "voluntary transfer of biological units." Ideas such as "payment" and "commerce" seems less easily understood. Sheol have no concept of private property, and have no compunction about taking whatever they wish as long as it does not seem to be presently used by someone else. Sheol also find the concept of currency mystifying.

Nevertheless, *most* Squid Mothers have gained some inkling of the human concepts of "balanced exchange" and a persistent trader can usually make a worth-while barter. Sheol are very interested in Imperial machinery, especially computer systems, software, gravitic technology, tools, programmable robots, biotechnology and scientific data. Any gadgets traded to the Sheol will have to be made to withstand Sheol's pressure and atmosphere, which requires special production and increases their cost by 300 percent.

What can the Sheol offer in return? Although they produce few material goods that are more than curiosities, Squid Mothers have proved willing to cheaply synthesize complex organic biochemicals, given a supply of basic raw materials such as nitrogen and carbon compounds. This can cut the prices of medical (and recreational) tabs by up to 90 percent, enabling a canny trader to realize a massive profit. Furthermore, it is possible that they could produce organic computers or other examples of biotech which could be useful, although they may require a special environment chamber to function in.

To prevent disruption of Imperial trade patterns and protect local biochemical industries, the Jade-London authorities at Sheol Station impose a fifty percent tariff on any traders, and are on the lookout for those attempting to get the Sheol to synthesize illegal substances. Of course, a merchant doesn't have to deal through Sheol Station, but only the most adventurous individuals will risk Imperial gunboats and Sheol's weather and wildlife to strike a deal on their own.

WARFARE AND WEAPONRY

Sheol are not territorial and do not fight among themselves. The major threat are various semi-sentient and non-sentient parasites and predators.

Monitors are the warriors of Sheol society, though they are as much biological caretakers as soldiers. They patrol the Squid Mother's network of passages and vents, always alert for dangerous parasites that might infest it. They use their tongue-tentacles to lick away small barnacle-like encrustations or parasitic growths. Far more dangerous are infestations by larger parasitic creatures, especially Hydrogen Wasp colonies or the deadly Psychovores. If a Psychovore or H-Wasp infestation is detected, all Monitors mobilize to repel the invaders, after which search-and-destroy missions are mounted to eliminate any egg-colonies they may have left behind.

The only time Sheol ever fight Sheol is in the rare case where an uncontrolled Psychovore infestation has penetrated into a Squid Mother's brain. In the months before its brain is totally consumed by the parasites, the "brainsick" Mother will become a berzerk predator, stalking and killing anything it can find, and serving as a vector for further infestations. All Sheol consider eliminating such an abomination to be a matter of mutual survival, and several Squid Mothers may cooperate in the hunt.

In combat, Sheol normally prefer to use living weapons, whether it is the crushing tentacles of the Squid Mothers or the poison spines of the Monitors. Adaptives and Monitors could also wield human weapons, although they would have to be designed to function in a gas giant environment without malfunctioning.

Sheol have also used specially designed biotoxins, with mixed results. Although bacteriological warfare has proven effective against several species of Delta predators, the rapidly-evolving Psychovores have proven disturbingly resistant, and mutant strains immune to the different plagues have begun to appear. If they wanted to, the Sheol would have no trouble developing biotoxins designed to affect humans, although due to their racial psychology it is unlikely they would do so.

12.7 ▊▊▊▊▊▊▊▊▊▊▊
HOMEWORLD

Sheol is the fourth planet of a K8 main sequence star located on the fringes of House Jade-London, near Idorian space. A large gas giant, Sheol has a diameter of 110,000 kilometers, and an atmosphere composed of 89% hydrogen, 10% helium, and 1% other gasses, chiefly ammonia, methane, water vapor, complex phosphates and hydrocarbons.

Sheol has an estimated population of ten billion Messengers and several hundred million Squid Mothers, though exact figures are uncertain — even the Sheol don't know for sure.

Sheol's atmosphere is 800 kilometers deep, composed of many layers of clouds. The yellow and white upper clouds are ammonia crystals, stained with red from traces of phosphorous compounds tossed up from the lower atmosphere, with temperatures of about 120 degrees below zero, and pressures of 0.5 to 1.5 atmospheres.

Farther down, the lower cloud belts are a salmon and grey mass, composed of water droplets, ice crystals and drifting ammonia cirrus. Temperatures rise to a comfortable 10° to 30° C, with pressure from two to four times that of Earth's atmosphere. This is the level inhabited by most of the gas giant creatures, including the Squid Mothers and Messengers.

Weather conditions are fierce. Winds typically reach 300 km/hour which whip flurries of hydrocarbon sleet or ammonia hail. Vast columns of ascending or descending gas and huge anti-cyclones form storms the size of entire continents. Violent electrical storms send million volt lightning flashes through the clouds, and the entire planet is drenched in constant radio noise. But visibility is surprisingly good. Soft, pearly light illuminates the upper layers of the cloud banks, and at night it becomes a deep purple twilight. Because of the size of the gas giant, the curvature of the horizon is minimal, so at the level of water vapor, the visual range may be up to 500 km.

As one descends farther into the atmosphere, the clouds get denser and darker. Finally the clouds form into solid banks, thickening into a billowing mass of pink, yellow and red that never breaks. Sheol can go no deeper than this, for beneath the final cloud bank, the pressure increases rapidly. The atmosphere finally turns liquid, forming an immense ocean of liquid hydrogen. This is Sheol's "surface" where the pressure is measured in the hundreds of thousands of atmospheres and the temperature in the tens of thousands of degrees. Even deeper down, at a depth of about 20,000 kilometers, the hydrogen ceases to be liquid and becomes metallic, until finally a solid core is reached with a mass about ten times that of Earth.

HOUSING AND CITIES

The Squid Mothers bodies contain the dwelling places, nurseries and laboratories of the Messengers. The inside of a Squid Mother is a maze of undulating vein-like passages connected by expanding and contracting sphincters, and womb-like chambers. Vents release pulses of gas at random intervals, and eerie sounds echo through its confines, the products of Messenger sonar and the constant life-rhythms of the Squid Mother.

The interior atmosphere is unbreathable to humans, but the Squid Mother can create small enclaves inside it with an oxygen-nitrogen environment and tolerable pressure and temperature, and can also synthesize supplies of liquid water. The major problem is preventing hydrogen leakage. Any human visitor is cautioned to avoid carrying anything that could make a spark! To avoid these problems, and to move freely through the Squid Mother, visitors wear suits and take along a pressurized shelter bubble and sufficient rations to last the duration of the stay.

12.8 ▊▊▊▊▊▊▊▊▊▊▊
ADVENTURE SUGGESTIONS

A few individuals, chiefly anthropologists, have been allowed to travel inside the Squid Mothers for extended periods of time. Since Sheol is a large planet and storms can carry Squid Mothers far from Sheol station, prospective travellers should be aware that a journey on board a Squid Mother can last for months, and is not without its dangers. And at least one human has been killed when a Psychovore infestation penetrated to his environmental module before being destroyed by Monitors.

PCs may be hired to accompany traders or scientists on a voyage inside a Squid Mother, serving either as alien contact specialists or bodyguards. The goal of the expedition may be to study the Sheol, to trade with Squid Mothers who have never visited Sheol Station, or even a pilgrimage to witness some exotic sight — perhaps the launch of a giant biological probe into the planet's depths or the birth of a Hungry Seed. On the way, the characters will have to deal with translation problems, claustrophobia, the danger of hydrogen leaks causing explosions, over-curious Adaptives dismantling vital equipment to see what makes it tick, and possibly an invasion of deadly parasites or even join the hunt against an infested, brainsick Squid Mother!

SYSTEM NOTES

Generate Messenger characters in the same way that humans are generated, but use the *Alien Statistic Table* for the specific characteristic modifiers, which vary by Messenger sub-race. Adaptives may be Astronauts (Explorer), Field Scientists (Medic or Planetologist), or Research Scientists (any profession). Monitors will always be Armsmen, Facilitators and Interpreters are Administrators, and Spinners are Technicians (although their skills would be limited to building and repairing bio-organic materials).

All Sheol have AT 4. If they take damage, adjust criticals to reflect their alien physiology, perhaps applying leg hits to their under-tentacles and arm hits to their mouth tendrils. Adaptives and Monitors can develop skill in *Sheol Unarmed Combat*, which can be treated as a weapon skill using their tentacles, which function as a Large Grapple attack. Monitor tentacles also deliver secondary (one level less) Slash criticals, and any A or better critical indicates the target has been injected with a 20th level reduction poison!

Squid Mothers should be treated as creatures, with abilities as 20th level Researchers and biological Engineers. Stats for the Squid Mothers and their offspring, as well as Psychovores and Hydrogen Wasps can be found in *Gas Giant Ecosystem* section of this book.

13.0

SPYDERS

Spyders evolved from six-limbed nocturnal omnivores who once lived in and among the branches or burrowed under the roots of the great trees of Goldendawn's forests. This starfaring race has only recently been contacted by humans and other races, but their highly developed culture and unusual method of communication has already left its mark on interstellar society.

13.1

APPEARANCE AND PHYSIOLOGY

A Spyder is slightly larger than a man, walking erect on two legs but with an extra pair of limbs it can use as either arms or legs. The average Spyder is a 2.4 meters tall and weighs 50 kilograms. Its torso is triangular, wider than it is long, with charcoal grey skin and long silky hair, dark grey or blue-black, except for a hairless wedge-shaped face. A Spyder has a small mouth, with sharp teeth, and a flat nose, while its ears are small but pointed, protruding above the top of the head. A Spyder's most prominent facial features are its large, oval eyes.

Spyders possess two legs and four arms, long, bony and muscular but thinner than those of a human. Each limb has an extra set of joints, effectively an extra elbow or knee. The upper and lower arms differ, for while the lower pair of arms is stronger, adapted for occasional quadrupedal movement or burrowing, the upper set is more dexterous and utilized for manipulation and weaving glyphs. Each hand ends in a thumb and four fingers tipped with sharp claw-like nails, originally used both for rending prey and burrowing.

A standing Spyder appears deceptively similar to a human, if the silky coat of hair, triangular face and extra pair of arms are ignored. Once in motion this resemblance ceases: the fluid grace of the double-jointed limbs, especially on all fours, have reminded human observers of giant spiders, hence the race's human name. This impression has been heightened by their unique mode of communication: they are incapable of speech, instead communicating visually by weaving intricate web-like symbols known as glyphs.

The Spyder's ears are poor on Goldendawn, and even in denser atmospheres hearing is inferior to a humans. Their sense of taste and smell equal ours, and their sense of touch is marginally better. Eyesight is excellent: depth perception is superior to a human, and they can see farther into the red and violet ends of the spectrum than we can.

Spyder intelligence is roughly comparable to that of humans, but all Spyders possess a perfect, eidetic memory.

Spyders are bisexual and warm-blooded, but they are not mammalian. Young are fed with predigested food until they are old enough to chew for themselves. A Spyder child achieves physical maturity after 17 Earth-years, and is considered an adult at age 25. Most Spyders live for about 120 years.

THE SIBLING PAIR

Spyders reproduce sexually in a manner similar to Terran animals, though they are less fertile and children are almost always born in twin brother-sister pairs. This sibling unit forms the basic element of their society, analogous to the human family.

The ties between twin brother and sister are the strongest in Spyder society, the two living, thinking, playing and working together, from birth until death, becoming almost a single entity, far closer than most human marriages. One of the pair's most important functions is to cooperate in weaving Glyphs. Only if a male and female spin their different colored threads together can the Spyder language express complex concepts, and only a sibling pair possess the empathy and shared purpose to cooperate properly in doing so.

This cooperation is the most important aspect of Spyder psychology and culture. Even mating takes place between sibling pairs rather than individuals, the two siblings choosing another pair of siblings as temporary sexual partners. Any children that result are raised by the mother's pair; the father and her sister have no claim upon them.

ROGUES

If one member of a sibling pair dies, the other becomes a *rogue*. Rogues traditionally commit suicide, (care for any children is handed over to relatives) but a few have been known to obsessively devote their lives toward eradicating the cause of their siblings death. If another being was responsible this may be revenge, but if, for example, a disease was the cause of death the rogue might devote himself or herself to a search for the cure!

Any rogue that does not kill itself is by definition insane, and is liable to develop numerous mental problems. Rogues are normally shunned by society; most quickly kill themselves, some become legends.

DIET AND FOOD

While the Spyder diet is similar to the human one in most respects, differing only in detail, the race is somewhat unique among omnivores in that they enjoy live food, particularly rodents.

The clean and attractive omnivorous scavenger Screech enjoys almost the same position of affection among the Spyders as does the kitten among human cultures except that most Screech are generally eaten by their owners before reaching their adult stage and resultant unpleasant metamorphosis.

Lower classes eat dead or frozen foodstuff's from necessity, but when a sibling pair is off world it is a mark of status to have live home world fauna brought along. Since Spyders choose clean and aesthetically pleasing food animals they see no reason to cage them. Consequently, the ships are often running with the beasts.

FAVORED ECOSYSTEM

Spyders prefer regions with average humidity and climate, and are most comfortable with a 0.85 atmosphere oxygen-nitrogen mix and a slightly lower (0.9 G) than human-average gravity field. They can tolerate Earth-like gravity and breathing a standard Terran atmosphere is possible, but the excess of oxygen tends to make them giddy and excitable. A simple atmospheric compressor (*Tech Book*, p. 25) removes this problem, however.

Their homeworld's thinner atmosphere lets through more ultraviolet then humans could tolerate, and Spyders have a greater resistance to UV radiation than do humans. Even so, they have a natural preference towards remaining under thick forest cover, underground or indoors during the day, and do not like to sunbathe.

13.2

LANGUAGE

The Spyder language is entirely visual, an evolution of webs spun by their ancestors to attract mates and catch food. Luminescent threads are extruded from glands in their mouths and woven into complex patterns by their delicate claws. Males and females secrete a different color of strand, the hue of which can be further altered by saliva, and these are combined into the complex "glyphs" which make up the race's language.

Glyphs are usually drawn on surfaces or spun between trees or structures (some humans have jokingly referred to this as "graffiti"); a single word concept is typically one foot across. Communication is slower than human speech, (approximately one sentence every 10 seconds) and requires a good deal more space, but is in some ways more precise, aided by the eidetic memory that the race possesses.

A Spyder conversation is a beautiful thing, combining elements of both dance and calligraphy, and unlike human words, is preserved until the glyphs dry and fade, which occurs after a few hours of sunlight. Printed representations of glyphs form a written language and Spyders have supplemented their glyphs with a well-developed sign language used for rapid communication.

NAMES

Spyder names are graphic symbols which may be translated into words using the closest human concepts: God-in-the-Pod, Coherent Light, Snake-in-the-Grass, Panzerlilly. A sibling pair will share a name, modified by glyph for male or female, composed of a personal name joined to the glyph for their Design.

TRANSLATORS

The Spyder Glyphs can be learned by humans and even reproduced using computer graphics or a paintstick. Translator Modules can also be modified to translate visual symbols into words and vice versa with the addition of a camera and some form of image projector. Weight doubles and price will be at least triple normal, mainly due to increased computer capacity required.

13.3
PSYCHOLOGY

The three virtues cultivated by Spyders are harmony, neatness and beauty. Violence is seen as both disharmonic and ugly, but if properly performed, violent acts can be tolerated to achieve greater harmony, to acquire, create or preserve beauty — or to eradicate ugliness. A Spyder's goal is often to surround itself with beautiful things. All Spyders cultivate a highly developed aesthetic sense and will take great pains to make, gain or protect something beautiful.

Although Spyders have nothing against natural dirt as such, any form of contamination which might ruin their appearance or that of their valued property is shunned. They will do anything to avoid this, even risking some personal danger (e.g., refusing to go down a mucky sewer when its the only way to hide from pursuers). Most Spyders are intolerant of other races, finding them depressingly ugly, but Spyders who adventure with humans can overcome this, learning to pity other species for their deformities.

A Spyder has no concept of guilt, only of shame. Any kind of disharmony is considered ugly. An improperly dressed, untidy, unclean, ill or wounded Spyder will try to correct his or her hideous condition as soon as possible, remaining in seclusion until this has been achieved. A Spyder pair will try not to reveal its personal distress to others, even to denying wounds or fear. If confronted with a mistake or other shameful situation, it will not apologize, but either correct it or remove itself (or eliminate whomever noticed!) so as to avoid further embarrassment.

This has led to an obsession with secrecy: Spyders tend to conceal their identity in public (and even in business deals they may identify themselves only through their Design or Pattern). When combined with the rigid Spyder social structure, this tendency results in the founding of numerous secret societies, "the Hidden Patterns" in which existing status, rules and conventions are replaced by those of the organization, some of which are highly bizarre. Offering opportunities for advancement otherwise denied to low status Designs, the Hidden Patterns secretly control much of Goldendawn's business, including many activities which humans would consider illegal.

The Spyder ethic of neatness and harmony means that Spyders will always try to follow a situation through to its ultimate conclusion, usually taking the long view. An elegant solution to any problem is sought, one that weaves together all loose strands. Work is rarely stopped on a project until it is finished; a Spyder would rather destroy everything and begin again later than leave something untidy and unfinished for long, perhaps because with their eidetic memories they can recall every step they previously took.

Among equals, cooperation is important. Spyders in a group will try to reach a consensus before proceeding with a course of action: if there is dissent, before any action can be taken the disharmonious element must either change his or her views to conform to the rest, convert the others to his or her own viewpoint, or be forced to leave the group. Those of lower status are expected to contribute advice but follow the decisions of their superiors.

Spyders of all social levels, but particularly those of higher status, are extremely vain about their appearance. A good appearance is essential for maintaining status. Fashion in clothing, jewelry, scents, and hair style (for the entire body, not just the head) is complex and variable, though constrained by tradition. Even adventuring Spyders will take care to remain in "proper grooming," a glyph which can simply mean personal appearance, but which refers more generally to a pair's apparent (if not actual) physical and mental state in relation to societies' expectations in a given situation. Of course, dress and accouterments for a commando raid differ from a formal ball, but one can be sure the pair will arrive in the best and most rakish of combat fatigues, with stylish and immaculately clean weapons and body hair dyed just so in camouflage patterns!

Spyders who are regularly in contact with other cultures will learn that culture's standards of attractiveness and mannered behavior so as to better judge individual members of the species.

13.4
SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Beyond the sibling pair the next social grouping is the Design, essentially a clan composed of relatives tracing their descent from a common mother and theoretically ruled by the senior sibling pair ("the Eldest"). With their eidetic memories and early development of written records some Designs can trace their ancestors back across 200 or more generations, and most comprise 100 to 500 pairs. Land and most valuable property (shops, industrial installations, commercial vehicles) is owned by the Design rather than the Sibling pair. In modern Spyder society the Design does not necessarily live together, but it nevertheless maintains its influence over its members especially by providing financial and other assistance to newly mature sibling pairs.

Any sibling pair is free to leave a Design and found its own, generally in cooperation with other pairs. This occurs for a variety of economic and personal reasons, and is traditional when a design exceeds 600 or so pairs. It results in Designs of widely varying size, the older and larger ones generally having the highest status and wealth.

Independent pairs and small Designs usually form the working class of Spyder society. Since the nature of Spyder society makes it impossible to "marry into" a Design, social mobility is limited and as a result society is both highly stratified and quite elitist at the upper levels. But adoption procedures do exist, and sometimes a young but prosperous Design will arrange to be adopted by an older but financially ailing one in order to gain the prestige of an ancient Symbol.

13.5
POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Goldendawn has no law or government as such. Spyders are less inclined to violence than humans, while organizations larger than the Design evoke little or no loyalty, though all Spyders share a deep rooted love for their race and planet. Spyder Designs provide many of the social services human governments do. Larger projects and city-wide services are handled by alliances of Designs, called Patterns. A Pattern is essentially a corporation, often but not always created by Designs related to one another. A pattern is created for a specific purpose, whether street cleaning or defense or owning and operating industries. Other designs or individual pairs may and often do contract the services of needed Patterns.

Usually the Designs of a city will have woven one or more Patterns that combine the duties of police, private security, paramedics and fire brigade. While any "justice" is summary, Spyders will likely refer serious decisions to the head of their Design who will consult all involved parties.

Although the larger Patterns are similar in many ways to human national governments or multi-stellar corporations their authority is considerably more diffuse. They do not become entities in their own right as human governments or companies often do, remaining instead a collection of Designs, brought together for a specific purpose. Though if one Design is stronger, it may control the Pattern.

RELIGION AND MYSTICISM

Spyder forms of devotion tend towards ancestor worship; there is no organized priesthood, but each household usually has a shrine devoted to honoring the spirits of important ancestors. A larger shrine usually exists at the clan house of each Design, and annual rituals are held there on important occasions such as the anniversary of the Design's founding, presided over by the Eldest. The key feature of these services is the reading of the Great List of Names, which given that most genealogical records can stretch across scores of generations, can take a *long* time.

MILITARY

The Spyders have no military as such, though Designs and Patterns may possess heavy weaponry and pairs who are trained to use it. But no Spyder has any interest in being purely a warrior. Though they can and do fight, war is not a profession and anyone who devoted himself to such would be considered strictly lower class. There are exceptions: if a murder is cleanly and tastefully executed with some morbid style or irony, the killer is considered just another artist, and Spyders in need of such activities would prefer to pay for a professional assassin rather than trust an amateur!

INTERSTELLAR POLITICS

The Spyder homeworld has only recently been discovered on the edges of Imperial space. So far, the Spyders are independent, but they are seriously considering the possibly of joining humanity's Empire, probably with Minor House status.

From the Imperium's viewpoint, it would be a great advantage to bring this industrious and relatively peaceful race into an alliance with humanity. Few efforts are being spared to convince the Spyders of the wisdom of forging such an alliance. For the moment, at least, the Imperium is handling the Spyders with kid gloves, and woe betide the unscrupulous merchant or incautious adventurer who offends them.

13.6 ∎
TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

Spyder technology is similar to that of humanity, but differs in a few respects. "Soft" materials technology, synthetics and textiles are especially advanced, as are their laser and microwave technologies. The Spyders excel at subterranean construction. Medical and chemical technology is not quite up to human standards, while bioengineering is poorly developed. Spyders have nothing similar to human replicants.

Transportation technology, including spaceflight is also retarded by human standards. Spyders invented the wheel only late in their history. Most modern land vehicles, including non-hover ground car equivalents are walkers, usually four or six-legged, though these are rarely owned by individual pairs. Mass transport is by underground subterranean shuttle or slidewalk. Water vehicles are usually hydrofoils, advanced blimps providing cheap aerial transport. Gravitic flyers may be imported, but are not yet manufactured.

Spyder industries are remarkably clean: Goldendawn's thinner atmosphere makes solar power, especially satellite augmented, more practical, and this is supplemented by wind, tidal and geothermal energy sources. During their early technological age some unscrupulous industrialists hid nuclear and ecologically threatening industrial plants in desert or arctic zones, but with the development of space travel all such dangerous eyesores were placed in orbit or deep space.

WEAPONRY

Spyders who may be involved in violence prefer clean weapons which produce interesting "artistic" effects: stunners or disruptors, needlers with poisoned needles, taserguns, and poison darts. Strangulation is the usual unarmed attack. Brute force weapons such as blasters or plasma projectors are considered crude and distasteful. Spyders have also developed special microwave weapons (see the *Artifacts* section for statistics).

SPACECRAFT

Spyder spaceships resemble their cities: three dimensional mazes of wide passages, balconies and catwalks, dimly lit yet full of phosphorescent color. For cheap in-system travel (and sight seeing) solar sailing ships — lightjammers — are common. More advanced propulsion systems are rare and usually restricted to the few starships owned by powerful trading Designs or Patterns.

TRADE AND COMMERCE

A trader can do good business on Goldendawn if he can deal with native customs. Most off-world commerce is handled through trading Designs and Patterns, equivalent to human companies and multinational corporations respectively. The Spyders are eager to trade, though they will usually insist on intricate ceremony, long bargaining sessions, and proper manners.

Goldendawn is famous for its natural and synthetic fabrics, possessing unmatched texture, hue and strength. Some Spyder Patterns have begun to produce human clothing for export, and these are greatly in demand on Terran worlds, with prices that rival the best true leather and natural furs. Spyder computer graphics software and their holographic systems are also noted for their quality and workmanship. Their laser and disruptor technology is also highly refined: Spyder equipment is compact, elegant and powerful, though they do not market heavy military weapons. Their developments in "clean" power technology have found buyers where nuclear power plants are impractical or too expensive. Spyder solar panels and powersats are among the best in known space, and their engineers will build geothermal core taps for a price. Spyder esthetics are close enough to human that much of their art can be appreciated without explanation and a lively trade exists in originals and reproductions with many human collectors haunting the tunnels of Goldendawn, searching for overlooked masterpieces.

In return for selling such goods, the Spyders will import advanced electronics, industrial machinery and tools, starship parts and high tech alloys. Rather than mine Goldendawn they will buy supplies of rare minerals, though they are able to fulfill much of their basic mineral needs by exploiting their own asteroid belt and outer planets. They are always interested in luxury goods, particularly new foodstuffs (especially spices) and rare textiles that please them. They have little demand for weaponry, vehicles, consumer goods or mobile robots (which they find vaguely repugnant). Art objects are welcomed, though the Spyders have more interest in originals, for their status value, finding much human and other alien art incomprehensible.

CURRENCY

Spyders possess a monetary system similar to the Imperial Elmonit; if Goldendawn became integrated into Terran culture, it would probably adopt the Imperial scheme, or at least, a system compatible with it.

HOMEWORLD

Spyders are native to Goldendawn, a 0.9 G terrestrial world that orbits a yellow G3 star. The planet's average temperature is a bit cooler than on Earth (average temperature 0° C), and its oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere has only 0.85 standard air pressure. The planet has a single moon, Silvermask, which is about the size of Earth's moon. Most of Goldendawn is heavily forested, with patches of arctic tundra and open prairie, and several very high mountain ranges.

The Spyder obsession with beauty and cleanliness goes hand in hand with a deep seated desire to live in harmony with their planet. The race may change Goldendawn's face if necessary, but as much as possible, its ecology and natural beauty have been preserved, especially the forests. Despite the planet's 1.5 billion population, its cities, agriculture, and industry have been carefully designed to blend into the nature. An observer from orbit who lacked proper instruments would be hard put to notice the signs of civilization.

HOUSING AND CITIES

The urban dwellings of Spyders reflect their philosophy of not harming their environment. Most Spyders would rather live in the countryside, but even in cities homes are built out of stone glass or metal rather than wood, and much of the city is out of sight, either above the tree canopy or below ground, the Spyders preferring to build vertically rather than horizontally. Spyders enjoy climbing, and both individual rooms and whole cities are arranged in three dimensions, with plenty of claw holds, probably because its the only way several thousand Spyder pairs can have space to weave conversations.

A Spyder city is centered around huge towers, arcologies with as many as 10,000 inhabitants, which rise high above the trees. These towers are owned by one or more Patterns and contain homes, shops, offices or light industry. Below ground the cities are strange and beautiful, and despite having much of the bustle of a human city, they are eerie in their relative silence. The many leveled towers also sink deep into the earth, and individual arcologies are connected by a three dimensional web of tunnels, illuminated by phosphorescent lichens, many-hued artificial lights or the ever changing Glyphs. Hypersonic subterranean shuttles (see *GM Book*, p. 35) and high speed moving sidewalks link the more distant arcologies. Between each arcology are miles of park-like forest mixed with tended gardens and belts of farm land, or the green covered mounds that are suburban burrows. Large areas of Goldendawn are untended wilderness left in a natural state.

COSTUME AND MASKS

Spyders need little clothing due to their natural coat of body hair, and except in hostile environments, what they wear is entirely ornamental: silk sashes, multicolored in intricate patterns, hooded cloaks, reversible with different hues to indicate shifts in mood or one's own reaction to others. Costumes are light and easily altered, serving as a means of communication as much as a badge of status. Human diplomats have gone crazy trying to analyze the meaning of a Spyder pair reversing their clothing or turning and donning a new mask.

Masking is common, both to preserve secrecy and as a fashion in itself. Masks may be of simple cloth or elaborate semi-solid constructions covering the entire face. These may be abstract or realistic, representing Spyders, animals or rarely, other races. Most own several, and nearly all Spyders living off world will go masked when in the presence of aliens (often incorporating life support, vision or communications equipment). To remove ones mask indicates, depending on the context, either great trust or, sometimes, great contempt, implying that the individuals in whose presence it is removed are so lowly one need not feel shame for any actions.

ADVENTURE SUGGESTIONS

A human government or corporation has important diplomatic and trade connections with one of the larger Spyder Patterns. A rival Pattern, whose Designs prefer less contact with repulsive off-worlders (and less competition for Spyder industries) attempts an assassination of their rival's ambassadors, but only the male of the pair is slain. The female vows to avenge her brother's murder but, realizing that as a Rogue she can expect little help from her own race, requests the aid of human agents or she will have her pattern break off relations.

Eager to salvage something, the government or corporation hires the PCs, (if they are not already government or corporate employees) with the promise of substantial reward from both them and the ambassador's Design should they succeed in tracking down the assassins, or at least, from their employer's view point, just succeed in keeping the ambassador happy.

The assassins are professionals, but with the ambassadors knowledge of Goldendawn and the player characters' off-world skills and technology, the characters have a chance of finding their targets. Furthermore, Spyder psychology makes the task of finding the killers somewhat simpler then it may look. The assassins have not finished a job, and hate leaving work unfinished, so they will not rest until the remaining ambassador is killed.

Still, things aren't easy. Under the direction of the half-insane and rapidly deteriorating rogue, the player characters must trace their quarry through the burrows of an alien world where a dozen secret societies may be involved and every one masked, knowing that it may turn upon them at any time. Meanwhile the faction that killed the diplomat has its own plans, involving ending all contact between humans and the Spyders. They would like nothing better than to push the off-worlders into doing something that would result in a movement to expel all humans from Goldendawn!

SYSTEM NOTES

Spyder characters are fully suitable for use as PCs (but see *Twins* below). Use the *Alien Statistics Table* to determine modifiers for Spyder characteristics, but otherwise they may be generated in the same manner as humans.

Spyders have two extra limbs, and are naturally double jointed. However, they cannot speak at all (instead communicating with glyphs and gestures). They possess poor hearing, with a penalty of -10 on Perception when listening is involved, but can see in the dark, and have vision that is just as good as a human's. All Spyders find climbing easy and natural: add +25 to the chance of any climbing maneuver.

In melee a Spyder can attack with claws, or punch as a human does, but cannot kick. Double its movement speed when a Spyder is using the lower set of arms as legs. If so, it takes it one round to get up and use them again as arms.

All Spyders possess natural eidetic memories and night vision, and are double jointed, and this gives them the equivalent of Special Abilities 4, 10 and 12 (*Player Book*, p. 49 and p. 52). They suffer no penalties for abilities 10 and 12, but normal penalties (-15 to vision without tinted goggles in bright light) for ability 4.

Most human character classes have counterparts in Spyder society. As a general rule, few Spyders will be Armsmen (with the exception of the rare assassins) or Arms Techs. All other character classes are possible, from Criminologist to Theologian. Telepaths are about as common among Spyders as they are among humans: rare, but they do exist.

There are several jobs which can lead a Spyder to adventure among humans. A Spyder character may be or have been an agent for a corporate Pattern or a trading Design, a collector of rare and beautiful things (or even a thief, an honorable profession on Goldendawn), an explorer, or if wealthy, a wandering dilettante.

With the exception of rogues, anyone playing a Spyder must either play both siblings, or have the second controlled by the GM as an NPC companion. Due to the nature of the sibling bond, neither can bear to be separated from the other for more than a few hours. If dire circumstances force them apart for 5 hours or more, each must make a *Routine* roll using Self Discipline bonuses only, every 5 hours to avoid dropping whatever he or she is doing and attempt to rejoin his or her twin. Unless actively searching, the character will be at -20 on all rolls due to anxiety and inability to concentrate on anything else. If both twins are in regular communication (by radio or whatever) they need only check once per day.

14.0

TEZCAT

The Tezcat evolved from bipedal nocturnal hunting omnivores occupying a similar ecological niche to *homo sapiens*. Although their natural armament of claw and fang is fierce by human standards, their homeworld's fossil records suggest that the Tezcat were naked and unarmed in comparison to many of the planet's other life form, and had to rely on intelligent cooperation to survive.

An important element of Tezcat culture is their extreme xenophobia, which is rooted in their early history. Tezcat were the second race on their planet to develop intelligence, sharing the planet with the Varaku, a carnivorous race of flying pseudo-reptiles.

Unlike Earth, where para-human species such as Neanderthal Man were either assimilated or destroyed prior to civilization, the inter-species rivalry on the Tezcat homeworld of Aum-Rhar continued into the planet's early pre-industrial age. At one point nearly all of the Tezcat were enslaved by the Varaku, and the survivors lived like animals in desolate wilderness regions. A daring rebellion led by a cultural hero, Vre Rhar, brought freedom but not peace, and eventually the struggle culminated in a wars of extermination that left the Tezcat the sole surviving race.

But the price of freedom was a bitter legacy of xenophobia, a deep-ingrained feeling that "different" means "enemy." The Tezcat have carried this sentiment with them to the stars.

14.1

APPEARANCE AND PHYSIOLOGY

A typical Tezcat stands some 170 cm tall, and weighs about 70 kg. He or she has a slim humanoid body covered with catlike fur the color of a gasoline slick on asphalt.

A Tezcat's head resembles an anthropomorphic fox's, featuring a short muzzle with a flat nose, and a high forehead framed by a pair of large, pointed ears, the whole dominated by two huge, slit-pupiled silver eyes. Its mouth is fringed with whiskers. The teeth resemble a human's, but are somewhat sharper, and there are more of them. Its tongue is forked, like a snake's.

Tezcat limbs are long and graceful, human-like, but somewhat longer in the calf and forearm and shorter in thigh and upper arm. They have furry catlike tails which are forked, splitting into two whip-like branches near the tip. Their arms end in clawed hands equipped with three fingers and a thumb. A Tezcat's razor-sharp finger claws are incredibly dexterous tools as well as being deadly weapons. A Tezcat has such precise control that he could peel a grape's skin with a single claw, and not touch the grape's flesh.

They are a quick and graceful race, with faster synaptic reflexes then most humans. Because their bodies are covered with fur, they cannot cool themselves by sweating. Instead, they must pant (like cats or dogs) when they are fatigued.

Tezcat senses of smell, hearing, and taste are somewhat more acute than a human's, although not by much. Tezcat males and females can, however, detect romantic interest from another member of their species by scent alone, which has obvious implications for Tezcat courtships. Their visual sense is slightly inferior to a human's in daylight, and has a narrower spectral range, but is more acute at night. Their tactile sense is identical to mankind's.

Tezcat are warm blooded, and protein-based, using left-handed amino acids. Their biochemistry is a close analogue of Terran DNA. Tezcat are mammalian: their females have four breasts. Tezcat females can control their own ovulation, thus pregnancy is a voluntary matter. Twin births are most common, but litters of three or four infants are not unknown. Tezcat children are born blind and deaf, and are helpless for up to six months after birth. As a result, females are very protective of their children. A Tezcat matures after about 19 Earth-years; average life span for a Tezcat is 80 years.

FAVORED ECOSYSTEM

The Tezcat evolved on Aum-Rhar, a world that was somewhat colder and wetter than Earth. They breathe a standard oxy-nitrogen atmosphere at 1.1 atmospheres pressure. Their home world was slightly denser than Earth, with a 1.1 G gravity field.

Tezcat can live in any environment a human can, but like it cool, damp, and foggy.

DIET

Tezcat enjoy meat they have killed themselves and freshly picked vegetables; dead meat is dismissed as carrion. Tezcat have no compunctions whatsoever about eating sentient prey.

14.2

LANGUAGE

Tezcat speech is a mix of hissing sibilants and deep, low throaty sounds, plus occasional howls and screeches for emphasis. The major language group is Prur, which is difficult for a human to learn, having a somewhat disorderly structure (like English), but can be mastered with study.

Tezcat language includes a substantial non-verbal body language component. In particular, tails serve as an unconscious means of signalling the emotional states of their owners. A twitching tail

indicates nervousness or anger, a tail held high and straight signals determination, and a rhythmic swaying tail is a sign of contentment.

NAMES

Tezcat names are fanciful and consist of a string of soft, purring words. Names are selected by the child's parents, and are based on parental hopes for the child. Mothers select the names of sons, and fathers of daughters. A name usually includes the word Sume (son) or Mra (daughter): this is how to tell a male or female name apart. Because of Tezcat aggressiveness, many names are warlike in nature. An example of a Tezcat name is Keshyathree Vre Sume Nathra l'Lurr, which would translate into the "Twelfth Darkness that Stalks the Stars, Son of Dancing Moonlight, Eater of the Soulless."

14.3
PSYCHOLOGY

Compared to humans, Tezcat are very affectionate to each other, with even strangers wrapping their tails together in greeting, rubbing together, or touching tongues. Tezcat can swiftly change their mood from serious to playful. Sober meetings on military or commercial strategy may be interrupted for impromptu games of tag around the conference table. Even warfare is treated as a game, albeit a deadly one.

Tezcat mate casually and frequently with members of the opposite sex, usually with respected co-workers and partners. For the duration of the relationship, mates enjoy almost total intimacy, living and working together in the same profession.

Tezcat are quite impetuous; they are mercurial people, changing moods rapidly. They do not hide their feelings: they say what they think, and do not hesitate to express anger or annoyance. An enraged Tezcat becomes unnaturally still, his or her eyes glaze, and he or she ceases to speak, but may hiss softly. Any insult or threat will result in a vicious hand-to-hand attack that will only end with death or, more likely, with the offender assuming a submissive posture on all fours, tail tucked between its legs, which is acceptable as an apology.

Still, while they may kill someone in a spurt of quick anger, they do not hold grudges to the extent that humans (or Lithkind) do. The reverse of this is also true: a Tezcat may appear friendly, but this is often surface politeness and playfulness which can easily change if the person offends.

For recreation, Tezcat play physical games, ranging from complex team sports to versions of tag or hide-and-seek. They also enjoy poetry and story-telling. They have no musical tradition, but do watch both live and recorded drama. A common art form is very energetic acrobatic dancing. Tezcat dances are sensual, often shamelessly erotic, and may sometimes turn into impromptu on-stage courtships. Tezcat also find great sport in hunting live prey, especially sentient aliens who have somehow impressed them as honorable enemies.

TEZCAT XENOPHOBIA

The Tezcat reaction to aliens depend on the appearance of the race they are is dealing with and the degree of xenophobia the individual Tezcat possesses. By and large, the more "alien" the race from the Tezcat's perspective, the more extreme the xenophobia. The exception to this rule is a few sects of Shaper fanatics, who consider humanoids as "mockeries" of the One True Form, and as such far worse than stranger creatures!

But in general, warm-blooded humanoids such as humans, Lithkind and Idorians are treated with suspicion or contempt, rather than hatred. An average Tezcat will regard a human as a somewhat inferior Tezcat; they will expect humans to conform to Tezcat behavior and values, and react with annoyance or anger when they do not. Tezcat

can come to respect (or even befriend) a particular human, but will still think of the vast mass of humanity as contemptible, and will often behave in a patronizing manner even to humans they believe are friends.

Aliens like the Spyders, Evantha, or Drakarans, who appear humanoid, but have extra limbs, wings, or scales, are treated as racial enemies. To the Tezcat, they are the heirs in spirit of the Varaku oppressors who enslaved their race, dangerous animals that have somehow learned to use technology. Such an alien might be able to visit the Tezcat homeworld on a vital diplomatic mission (like discussing its own surrender terms) but it had better stay off the streets if it doesn't want to get lynched! Only trained diplomats could deal with this kind of alien without showing fear, hatred or disgust, and even they will have difficult concealing their dislike.

Completely non-humanoid aliens like the M'sia, Valkyrie, Inyx (or the Snee and Trilopters from the *Player Book*) epitomize the Tezcat focus on xenophobia. Such beings are considered loathsome monsters. No Tezcat will ever tolerate such a creature in his presence — he or she would either attack or run, or might be physically ill. Only a trained Tezcat diplomat could avoid an extreme reaction, and would file a formal protest against sharing a planet with such a creature before storming out of any meeting in disgust.

The Tezcat attitude towards aliens can sometimes be a serious weakness. Tezcat expect humanoids to be reasonably cunning, but they still have an arrogant assumption of their own superiority. When dealing with less humanoid races, most Tezcat routinely underestimate intelligence and capabilities. Their own fear and hatred of the alien can lead them into poorly-planned actions or cause them to fall for simplistic provocations and traps. As a result, members of more humanoid races can even use this fear to manipulate the Tezcat into actions against stranger races. Any Tezcat would happily suspect even the peaceful but exotic-looking M'sia or Trilopters of a sinister plot to take over the galaxy or drive him, personally, out of business! Of course, this can be an asset if a small human colony needs help fighting off a Drakaran or Snee invasion. The Tezcat would gladly join with the humans to fight off the "alien monsters."

14.4 ■
SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The basic unit of Tezcat society is the *Iraahr*, a group marriage of four to eight males and females, who live and mate together, and raise their children in common. An Iraahr will typically live in a large country estate or smaller urban dwelling (often having both, and commuting, if it is rich enough). All members of an Iraahr are equal partners, although individuals with a strong personality can dominate it.

Iraahr are economic as well as emotional partnerships, and their existence is recognized by Tezcat law. When an Iraahr is formed, contracts are signed that arrange for the division of finances and the support of children if a member leaves the group, or if it breaks up. Although intimate relationships outside the Iraahr exist, any Tezcat female seeking to have children usually prefers to do so within the security of a legally-recognized Iraahr. Aside from legal formalities, forming an Iraahr, or joining an existing one requires little ceremony beyond the agreement of all existing members. However, the adoption of a new member is typically an excuse for several days of licentious celebration.

Both in and beyond the Iraahr, Tezcat society is quite egalitarian. Larger social structures, including business groups, organizations (even the Shaper Church) and government agencies tend to be democratic rather than hierarchical. The military is a minor exception, but even among the Worldkillers there is no artificial social distance

placed between officers and "common soldiers" and off-duty discipline is very slack.

RELIGION

Partly because of their love of life, Tezcat are also obsessed with death as the final end. A common belief among the Tezcat is that eating a dead being shows respect for him: the being becomes part of you. For this reason, Tezcat funeral services involve the devouring of dead friends and loved ones, while Tezcat warriors will show their respect for valiant humanoid aliens by devouring their bodies.

Tezcat have no other concept of the "afterlife" or of reincarnation. As a result, much of their philosophy and art revolves around the ephemeral nature of existence and the inevitability of final destruction.

Typical of this nihilist view is the religion of the dominant Prur culture, which centers around a being or force known as the Absolute, who created the Tezcat as its chosen ones. The Absolute is not a loving god; it is a personification of entropy that must be appeased with regular sacrifices so that normal life may continue. The worship of the Absolute is directed by the religious organization known as the Shaper Priesthood. The Shaper Priesthood claims descent from Vre Rhar, the hero who rescued the Tezcat from enslavement by the reptilian Varaku. The Shaper Priesthood, while xenophobic, fanatical and conservative, is a fairly democratic organization: leaders are elected, and policy is subject to regular votes by the membership, most of whom belong to different ideological factions. Internal politics within the church can be fierce!

Shaper doctrines center around Tezcat racial superiority, and the sacredness of the Tezcat form. Rationalizing the struggle with the Varaku, the Shaper Priests decided that all other forms of intelligent life were "soulless" beings, mockeries of true life that had to be destroyed. As a result, Tezcat relations with other alien species have been characterized by violent xenophobia. Shapers reserve their greatest hatred for "false gods" and delight in burning places of worship, exterminating religious leaders, and dropping nuclear weapons on churches.

Although there are many more subtle doctrines and rituals, Tezcat of the Absolute sacrifice sentient beings. The Tezcat consider aliens to be non-sentient, and so this is not a fate adventurers need worry about. They reserve it for their own criminals and heretics: ordinary citizens need not fear sacrifice to the Absolute, for it will take them in the end.

The Shaper Priests have identified the Absolute with the giant black hole which exists in the center of the Milky Way galaxy. Other black holes are considered sacred places ("Doorways to the Absolute"); there is a faction among the Shaper Priests that would like to send a combination pilgrimage and scientific expedition to the nearest one (known to Terrans as Cygnus X-1). Unfortunately, this means a journey of several hundred light years.

In ancient times, shrines to the absolute were usually deep pits surrounded by Stonehenge-like structures. Sacrifices were blinded and then buried alive. In these more enlightened times the sacrifices are usually tossed out airlocks (with suits, and a few days air) with a trajectory that should bring them to the galactic core in a few hundred billion years. A few "sacrifices" have been rescued by passing spacecraft before their air ran out. This is one way a Tezcat PC could join a band of human adventurers: the character is a religious heretic who owes a debt to the party for saving his or her life!

The Shaper-Priests can be stereotyped as an even mix of bureaucrats who have used the priesthood as a road to power, scholarly academics and philosophers, and fanatical true believers in whom the light of faith burns with a pure light. The Shaper Priests have

suppressed all other religions on Aum-Rhar. Most Tezcat have been brought up with the Faith, and believe in its basic tenets without question: they see themselves as the chosen servants of Entropy, and believe that the members of all other intelligent races are soulless zombies. However, not all the population are fanatics. Some citizens follow only the forms of worship, and there are even a few radical factions within the hierarchy who believe that the Faith should be reformed to allow "humanoid" aliens into the church!

INCARNATION

Even the most xenophobic of the Shaper Priests have acknowledged that sometimes a Tezcat soul is mistakenly born into the body of a soulless alien humanoid. Incarnation is the process that the priests use to free that soul from such a disgusting fate, and is considered the greatest honor a Tezcat can bestow upon an alien. All Incarnations must be approved by the Shaper Church, and requires a family ("Iraahr") to agree to sponsor the new Tezcat — usually because one Iraahr member witnessed the bravery or honorable action of the alien in question.

Incarnation involves radical surgery performed on an alien humanoid to turn them into a Tezcat. It can only be performed on races who are relatively similar in biochemistry to the Tezcat: this includes humans and other hominid races (e.g., Idorians or Churg), Lithkind and Evantha. The process requires about three months of cosmetic surgery, muscle, skin and bone grafts, and organ transplants, followed by extensive conditioning (i.e., brainwashing), but the end result is that the individual becomes "Tezcat" in nearly every way, the exception being the character's brain, and parts of his nervous system, spinal cord, etc.

The Incarnation process is very stressful, and insanity is not uncommon. GMs should require a RR (modified by Self Discipline) versus a 10th level attack to keep one's own mind intact; characters failing it should believe they are Tezcat, although some have been known to develop various personality disorders from the shock, such as a raging bloodlust against their previous species, paranoia, and so on.

All Tezcat treat an incarnated alien as one of them, and will go to great lengths (including psychological counselling) to make such a being feel at home. A human who is successfully Incarnated as a Tezcat is adopted into the sponsoring Iraahr, in order to encourage his or her transition into Tezcat society. Iraahr are group marriages, and an Incarnate individual can mate with actual Tezcat, and will be encouraged to form an intimate relationship within his or her new family. Since the genetic structure remains unchanged, any Incarnated individual mating with a natural Tezcat will not be able to produce offspring. But (for instance) an Iraahr might arrange for an Incarnate woman to be implanted with donated Tezcat embryos, thus enabling them to bear Tezcat children of their own.

14.5 ▰▰▰▰▰▰▰▰▰▰▰
POLITICAL STRUCTURE

The Tezcat are territorial, and wars are about as common among Tezcat as they are among humanity. The dominant culture among the Tezcat are the aggressive Prur nation, from Aum-Rhar's eastern island continent. The Prur are technologically inclined, energetic, and armed with a burning religious faith. They have a powerful zeal to bring civilization to the barbarians. Their outlook resembles a cross between early Islam and the British Empire. The Prur conquered the other Tezcat nations about two hundred years ago, and have since devoted their time to expanding Tezcat influence through space.

Prur government is a church-influenced democracy. There are two governing bodies: the *Hurarma*, is elected solely from high-ranking priests of the Shaper hierarchy. It has veto powers over laws affecting religious issues, and acts as a supreme court of appeal. The *Esrarm* is elected by geographic area to represent voters, and only a priest or someone who has served a full term in one of the three Prur military forces can vote or hold government office. The Esrarm, supported by the bureaucracy and military, sets taxes, regulates commerce, and decides government policy. There is no president: decisions are made by majority vote. Tezcat politics is a very noisy and active affair: a legislative session sounds like a horrific cat fight.

INTERSTELLAR RELATIONS

The Tezcat are territorial, expansionist, and xenophobic. The Tezcat dominate the deep Backnet of Frontier Zone 24, and presently control forty star systems containing habitable planets. Sixteen of them are former colony worlds taken from other species. But despite their conquests, they are still expanding.

The Imperial attitude to the Tezcat is typical of other human and humanoid cultures. The Imperium considers them to be a dangerous menace, whose only redeeming feature is that they make terrible enemies of the Valkyrie and Snee, and might be manipulated into a war with the Drakarans or Evantha should this ever be necessary.

Other races are less charitable. The Drakarans believe the Tezcat should be destroyed as efficiently as possible. The M'sia God Maker faction consider the Tezcat to be a prime example of a race that they should have been allowed to guide towards the true path. The Inyx are happy to finance any venture aimed at the Tezcat — as long as it can't be traced back to them! Of major species, the only ones that seem to be less popular than the Tezcat are the enigmatic Shai-en-Rin, parasitic Valkyrie and the rampaging Snee.

MILITARY AND POLICE

The Tezcat armed forces are divided into three branches.

The first branch is the *Soulhunters*, who perform the twin function of police and coastguard. The Soulhunters are responsible for regulating trade and commerce within the Tezcat Polity, and as such are likely to be encountered by any traders or scouts venturing into Tezcat space. Soulhunter armaments are relatively light, though counter-terrorist and "SWAT" team equivalents will possess military-style weaponry and defenses.

The second organization is the *Protectors*, who are responsible for planetary defense. They are heavily equipped with fighter spacecraft (lacking hypershunt capability), ground troops and armored vehicles, and they also control the many ground and orbital defensive fortresses that protect Aum Rhar.

The third branch of the Tezcat military is the *Worldkillers*. The Worldkillers are charged with invasions and strike missions into enemy territory. Like the Protectors and Soulhunters, they possess both space and ground forces.

The invasion strategy used by the Worldkillers is brutally simple. A Worldkiller squadron is based around a single Broodship. A Broodship is a fighter carrier, but it is also a factory. It enters a system and deploys a swarm of construction spacecraft which begin mining gas giant moons and dismantling asteroids to make more and more combat vessels. These vessels conduct the invasion, with the Broodship constantly building specialized battle units to meet changing tactical conditions. When attacking a humanoid world, Tezcat use holocaustic weapons, typically neutron warheads and asteroid weapons, to suppress defending forces. After the defenses are softened up, the Tezcat will send in armored vehicles, robot combat drones and ground troops to secure the planet and deal with any survivors. In each case, the pattern has been the same — wave assaults of Tezcat Worldkillers followed by troop landings, with even the slightest resistance met by the near annihilation of the defending population.

Typically, 75 percent of the defending populace will be killed in the attack, or slaughtered and eaten in the orgy of violence the victorious Worldkillers indulge in to celebrate their triumph. The survivors will be spared for slave labor, but Tezcat will sometimes use stun weapons *to capture valiant fighters for their game preserves, in order to provide better sport for their hunts.* The few aliens who somehow *impress* the conquerors (heroic warriors, artists, valuable scientists and engineers, and survivors of the Great Hunt) may be granted the dubious honor of "Incarnation."

Against more alien races, Worldkillers live up to their name. Such *planets will suffer prolonged bombardment using asteroid, fusion,* and antimatter weapons. Planets with valuable natural resources may receive more selective treatment, but when faced with "monster" races like the Inyx or Valkyrie, Tezcat Worldkillers are perfectly capable of turning an entire planetary surface into a radioactive desert, then sending in ground troops to slaughter any survivors who might be hiding underground.

14.6 ▰▰▰▰▰▰▰▰▰▰▰
TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

Tezcat technology is up to the standards of the Imperium, and in general, they have access to all standard Imperial equipment.

Although they are capable of making them, Tezcat do not use robots, replicants or androids that resemble living beings, due to religious prohibitions. Nevertheless, industrial robots and computer-controlled vehicles are as or more common than in the Imperium, and their medical technology is fully up to Imperial standards. Automated robot factories make most goods, and produce them to individual specifications. Partly because of their ruthless attitude toward conquering and looting other worlds, and partly because of their lower population base, the average Tezcat is wealthier than the average Imperial citizen.

WEAPONRY

Tezcat love weapons, and use many different types. In melee, they *prefer to use their claws and fangs. For close combat, they prefer* plasma beams, disruptors, and projectile weapons, especially MLAs and slug throwers. Tezcat also use a wide variety of grenades, especially Plasma Grenades and the newly-developed Helltwisters.

Tezcat soldiers are often fitted with PAX armor, a light-weight suit of powered armor that is cheap enough that almost every Tezcat *warrior can be equipped with one. PAX suits are fitted with sophis*ticated sensors and weapon systems, and are among the most feared weapons in the Tezcat arsenal.

PAX armor and Helltwisters are described in the *Artifacts* section of this book.

SPACECRAFT

Tezcat spacecraft are similar to human ships, although their interiors resemble those of Tezcat houses, with translucent internal bulkheads of glassy amber, emerald and smoky topaz plastic, and recessed amenities. They tend to be fast and deadly, with even civilian craft well-armed in order to deal with any "alien monsters" that might be encountered in a hostile universe.

COMMERCE AND CURRENCY

Tezcat have an active merchant fleet, trading with their colonies and conquered worlds. In general, raw materials are brought to Aum-Rhar, and manufactured goods flow out to the colonies. Many items, such as intoxicants, recreational chemicals, and those types and *modes of artistic expression deemed heretical or politically subver*sive are prohibited on religious grounds, or are heavily taxed.

As a rule, Tezcat do not trade with other races, although some smuggling does exist, usually by Tezcat criminal elements importing goods from humanoid worlds. The penalty for a Tezcat caught trading with aliens is death.

Smugglers may be hired to sneak a humanoid alien in for a massive bribe, but once on planet, an off-worlder's chances of evading detection are poor.

14.7 ▰▰▰▰▰▰▰▰▰▰
HOMEWORLD

*The Tezcat homeworld, Aum-Rhar, closely orbits a dim orange-*red K9 main sequence star; any closer and it would be tidally locked. Aum-Rhar is medium-sized planet, somewhat colder than Earth, and a trifle larger. Oceans cover 73 percent of its surface. It a place of cool crystal jungles and icy tundra, perpetually covered with fog.

One large moon, Ilynd, fills the nighttime sky. Ilynd has a thin *atmosphere, not quite breathable, although terra-forming projects* have been considered to alleviate this. The moon is the site of several industrial plants and scientific enclaves, but it has only a few thousand permanent residents. It is most notable as the personal residence of the elected High Priest of the Shaper Church. The complex includes the church libraries and master computer files, a training center, a medical center (sometimes used to perform the Incarnation ritual) and a domed hunting park incorporating vegetation and prey (some of it sentient!) from many worlds.

There are some 7 billion Tezcat in existence, scattered over 20 planets. Aum-Rhar has a population of 2.3 billion.

HOUSING AND CITIES

Cities are situated on the edges of seacoast, lakes, or rivers. Tezcat cities are quite attractive, with wide avenues dotted with trees and bushes. A Tezcat city is a lively chaotic place. It echoes with howls and shrieks, is pervaded with the smells of fog, damp fur and bloody meat, and is crowded with chasing, pouncing and leaping bodies jostling for bargains, selling goods, meeting friends, playing tag or *clawing for the right of way. Streets are full of open air stalls and* vendors hawking everything from religious literature and freshly killed meat to power cells.

Ground vehicles are banned within city limits during the day, but robot carry-alls hum through the city streets at night. Long distance travel may utilize giant cargo blimps, maglev monorails, and gravitic flyers. Starports are usually built in desert areas, and connected to major urban centers by rail links.

With the wealth of many conquered worlds to draw upon, most Tezcat can afford a private dwelling, so most Tezcat live in houses rather than apartments. Industry is generally kept in orbit, so the planet is clean and unpolluted. Power is mostly generated by fusion or antimatter plants, and except in equatorial areas, solar power is not practical because of the often-foggy conditions.

Tezcat buildings are translucent, made of glassy amber, blue or emerald plastiglass to better let the dim sunlight in. A stepped pyramid shape is common. Sizes range from four to over a hundred stories, with government and corporate buildings dominating the cities, each surrounded by their own wild gardens.

The insides of buildings have a "Japanese" feel, with paper or glass screens dividing rooms, rather than fixed solid walls. Furniture consists of low tables and sleeping mats: couches and beds do not exist (although spacecraft use couches for protection against acceleration). Colorful murals, often with accompanying written text, cover the walls, telling stories of victories and legends. Bathing areas and water closets are recessed into the floor. *The insides of Tezcat* buildings are covered in soft veldt they can scratch at. This also

applies to starships. Tezcat soldiers will absentmindedly claw at the walls while discussing doom and destruction.

Tezcat living off world are usually overlords of subjugated planets. As such, the lifestyle and architecture will usually be a curious blend of subject people and Tezcat, with clean glass pyramids rising over conquered cities, and slaves toiling in the farms and factories that lie beneath their shadows.

CLOTHING AND COSTUME

Tezcat fur keeps them warm, so they wear little clothing. For modesty and adornment, they tie three different-colored scarves over their bodies, covering the genitals, breasts, and neck. Scarf color varies with fashion, but priests always use three black scarves. Cold weather clothing, armor or space suits are worn as necessary; civilian gear tends to be in bright, solid colors, while the military uses camouflage. Jewelry is also worn, and both sexes pierce their ears: military insignia consists of jeweled earrings of various shapes to delineate branch and rank.

14.8 ∎
ADVENTURE SUGGESTIONS

The Tezcat make wonderful villains for the GM. Spurred by the twisted doctrines of the Shaper Priests, they are implacable enemies of humanity (and all other races). Yet their race also has many qualities that humans consider admirable. If their energies were redirected onto another path, the Tezcat could be a positive force in the universe.

One scenario might involve a character being captured by the Tezcat. If the PC fought well, he or she might be judged worthy of "incarnation" and wake up in the body of an alien race. If the brainwashing failed to take, the character would still have to "act Tezcat" to prevent being killed, at least until he or she had a chance to escape. This would give the player a chance to see first hand the "good" side of the race, and perhaps to make contact with individuals who oppose the Shaper Priests. Incarnate characters might even form friendly (or even romantic) relationships with Tezcat, especially

if enough of the brainwashing took hold to make the PC comfortable with his or her new form, if not with the racial ideology.

One particularly deadly mission would involve PCs being sent as spies to contact "moderate" factions among the Tezcat. The major problem would be getting onto Aum-Rhar, a world where to be an uninvited alien is to court an immediate death sentence. But this is not insurmountable. Characters might be able to be smuggled on world by resistance forces, perhaps in the guise of "soulless animals" captured by off-world forces and now bound for the hunting parks. After a wait in the holding pens, the characters would be contacted by resistance sympathizers, and whisked off to a safehouse. Of course, a screw up might end up with the characters actually making an appearance in the hunt!

Another possibility, which would let the characters move more freely: taking a leaf from the Tezcat's book, volunteers might be surgically modified to resemble Tezcat. Although it might mean several weeks of surgery, the procedure would be reversible. Replicants could be built using Tezcat DNA, or androids designed to resemble Tezcat instead of humans. But there is always a danger that any android or replicant might come to identify with the Tezcat rather than its human creators!

14.9 ∎
SYSTEM NOTES

Tezcat can be created using the same mechanics as those used to generate human characters. Refer to the *Alien Statistics Table* for characteristic modifiers.

All Tezcat possess claws that can be used as weapons; Tezcat may develop *Tezcat Unarmed Combat* as a melee Weapon Skill. Tezcat claws count as Medium attacks on the Claw Attack Table.

Tezcat are naturally agile and sneaky, and gain a +15 bonus with the following skills: Acrobatics, Ambush, Stalking and Hiding, Foraging, and Perception.

Due to their xenophobia, all Tezcat must pay *double* normal development costs to learn any alien language or Xeno-history, Xeno-anthropology, or Xeno-psychology.

VALKYRIE

The worm-like, parasitic Valkyrie exist inside the bodies of their hosts, slowly consuming them while dominating their minds and bodies. Possessing multiple personalities and capable of sudden shifts of behavior under stress, they are ruthless and xenophobic, seeking out new conquests and choosing the best of any captives as hosts. Originally incompatible with non-Valkyrie biochemistry, they are excellent genetic engineers and can adapt themselves to most protein based species — including humans.

15.1
APPEARANCE AND PHYSIOLOGY

Valkyrie are invertebrates, closely resembling tapeworms. A juvenile Valkyrie, a "larva," is a 10 cm long worm, thread thin, and nearly transparent. A Valkyrie larva is small, semi-intelligent, and almost helpless, driven by a powerful instinct to do only one thing: find a host.

The Valkyrie can "possess" most protein-based life forms. The Avatar, Inyx, Sheol and Shai-en-Rin are immune to Valkyrie infestations, as are robots and androids. Of the races described in **Space Master**, the Whirl-Kohl and Pearta Ghed would also be immune. A Valkyrie could not directly possess an Aoemaran, but if an Aoemaran took a possessed character as *its* host, it would itself come under Valkyrie control!

A Valkyrie larva can enter a potential host through any of the body's natural openings, usually the nose or mouth of a sleeping or restrained victim, and quickly make its way into the host's intestinal tract. In this fertile environment they grow rapidly, reaching a length of some 3 to 5 meters within a few days.

As a larva grows, it extrudes filaments that connect its nervous system with that of its host. It begins to function as a chemical factory, drawing nutrients from the host's body, manufacturing its own specialized cells that subvert the body's natural defense systems and modify its brain chemistry. Within a week, a larva will have grown into an adult Valkyrie, fully 6 meters long. At this point it will have totally interpenetrated its victim's nervous system. The victim will be "possessed."

After possessing an individual for a period of three and a half years, the Valkyrie will reproduce. This uses up a great deal of energy on the part of the host, for whom it is always fatal. During the reproductive process, which lasts for some two months, the host will be ravenously hungry and weak (-20 on all rolls). At some point he or she will fall into a coma. Twenty hours after entering the coma, the Valkyrie will complete its reproductive process, fissioning and retro-metamorphing, emerging from the host's dying body as two newborn Valkyrie larvae. These usually exit from the mouth or rectum. They must then seek hosts within the next two days, or die themselves from malnutrition.

When a Valkyrie fissions and retro-metamorphs into two larvae, all memories and skills are retained. All Valkyrie are potentially immortal for a fissioned Valkyrie's persona will live forever in its offspring. This also grants a perverse form of immortality to the Valkyrie's host: since the Valkyrie merges with the host's mind, its passed-on memories also contained fragments of the host's personality, which will live on in all its descendants.

FAVORED ECOSYSTEM .

A Valkyrie's favored ecosystem is the intestinal tract of a living carbon-based host. Outside a host, a Valkyrie larvae can survive within a temperature range of 0° to 40° C and a gravity range of 0.1 G to 1.5 Gs. They can exist in any oxy-nitrogen environment between 0.5 and 2 atmospheres pressure, on land or underwater.

Valkyrie larvae are reasonably hardy, but can only survive without a host for 40 hours before dying of malnutrition. This means that larvae will sometimes be forced to take less-then-optimum hosts like animals, derelicts, or children.

15.2
LANGUAGE

Valkyrie can only use their host's methods of communication (e.g., a possessed human would speak like a human). Actual language forms are adapted from the languages developed by all previous host-forms, and includes linguistic concepts dating back to the ancestral hosts on their distant homeworld.

NAMES

As a matter of convention, Valkyrie use the name of their host separated by a "/" and the name of the host its "parent" worm possessed, followed by the host *that* Valkyrie's parent possessed. Thus John Karter / Miranda Abrams / Trilishka-4 is a Valkyrie possessing John Karter, whose larvae came from Miranda Abrams, who was herself infected by a larvae from the possessed alien humanoid Trilishka-4.

15.3
PSYCHOLOGY

The controlling personality in any possessed being is the Valkyrie racial mind. The race-mind is convinced of the Valkyrie's racial superiority, and has a driving need to conquer other races and demonstrate the Valkyrie's natural right to rule.

Coexisting with the racial mind is the personality of the non-Valkyrie host. For example, suppose a Valkyrie larva possesses Cassandra Jones, a quiet female executive with a passion for sports. Most of the time the Cassandra the Valkyrie will exhibit its "racial" xenophobia and desire to dominate, mixed with Cassandra's corporate mentality and love of athletic activities. Sometimes the ghost-traits of the possessed mind will manifest themselves in perverse ways: the result of the shock of possession. For instance, a Valkyrie's host who was a compassionate doctor seek to perform hideous medical experiments on unwilling victims.

But this is not the entire story. Since larvae carry their parent Valkyrie's memories and personality, their parent Valkyrie will have been influenced by the person whom *it* possessed, and so on, although usually only the two most recent personalities in the chain have any influence, since memories tend to become distorted over time. Returning to our example, the larva that possessed Cassandra came from the body of Stick, a violent street thug whose sole goal in life seemed to be drugs and sex, and the larvae who possessed Stick inhabited a gentle, inquisitive ten year old girl. Every so often, Cassandra Jones/Valkyrie will revert to the personality of a violent street punk or a sensitive, curious child — again, always with the Valkyrie traits giving it direction and sometimes twisting the human persona into new and different forms.

In effect, all Valkyrie suffer from a racial form of multiple personality disorder. Valkyrie are capable of sudden shifts of behavior under stress. In any stress situation (e.g., when about to enter combat, working under a tight deadline, after taking a serious wound) the Valkyrie should make a Resistance Roll (adding Self Discipline bonus). RRs should usually be versus Level 5, with higher levels in

times of exceptional stress. Success means the Valkyrie retains its current persona. Failure means it assumes a different one.

To determine which personality is currently dominant, roll randomly:

01-40   Valkyrie racial mind alone.

41-70   Current host's personality.

71-90   Personality of Valkyrie's parent's host.

91-00   Personality of Valkyrie's grandparent's host.

As they are submerged in the Valkyrie racial mind, all human personalities will share the Valkyrie's common goals of conquest and domination, but their approach to them and their priorities may vary. For instance, under one personality a Valkyrie troop commander may be utterly ruthless in suppressing all resistance, regardless of casualties or civilian deaths. Then a sudden shift of character might turn him into a compassionate, chivalrous foe who is willing to negotiate honorable surrender terms. A Valkyrie's personalities may be *radically* different from each other, especially after being twisted by the shock of possession. One might be calm, cautious, and totally dedicated to its job, another personality could be open minded, curious and fun-loving with a streak of reckless courage, and the third might be a stubborn, cowardly xenophobe that delights in sadistic cruelty.

15.4 ∎
SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Valkyrie society is a single, all-encompassing order known as the Domination, in which there are two orders of being: the Valkyrie-possessed individuals, and those beings who are not currently being used as hosts.

THE SLAVES

Only about five percent of the population on a typical Domination planet is a Valkyrie. The rest are slaves, used to breed new host bodies and maintain the world's industrial and agricultural base. The Valkyrie care little for the lives of those who they have not chosen as hosts — as long as they breed to produce more bodies, and keep the factories running, that is enough.

To live as a serf is bad enough, but it is far worse when the slavers wear the bodies of their friends, relatives and lovers, or even more terrible, possess a vestige of the personalities, sometimes twisted into grotesque parodies of their original selves. For the subject peoples, life on a Domination planet is a living hell.

Every slave seethes with hatred and dreams of overthrowing the Domination. And oddly enough, the Valkyrie do little to stamp out this resentment, instead seeming to feed off of it. The Valkyrie could use modern mind control techniques to condition their entire slave populace to unquestioning loyalty. But the Valkyrie do not use these methods, instead relying on naked force and brutal police oppression to maintain their control. As a result, guerilla groups and resistance organizations thrive on Valkyrie worlds, and while few survive for more than a couple of years before being destroyed by police raids, a new group usually quickly rises to challenge the alien overlords.

Many observers have concluded that the Valkyric inability to totally stamp out resistance on their subject worlds is the symptom of a fatal weakness in the Valkyrie psyche, an arrogant reluctance to concede that non-Valkyrie could be a serious threat to the Domination. They believe that this could be exploited, that covert operations forces could be landed "behind Valkyrie lines" to organize a slave revolt to overthrow the alien puppet masters.

They are totally wrong.

The real reason for the "inefficiency" of Valkyrie counter-insurgency forces is very simple: every three years the Valkyrie reproduce themselves, killing their hosts. The Valkyrie prefer to implant their larvae in experienced individuals. What better recruiting ground for future strategists and infiltration specialists then in the valiant, resourceful guerilla leaders of an occupied planet? Resistance organizations and guerilla groups are allowed to grow, even permitted small successes, while being carefully, covertly monitored. When they become too dangerous, the secret police move in, and the supply of suitable hosts is again renewed.

THE RULERS

Because they share a single race-mind, every member of the Valkyrie is totally devoted to the goal of achieving ultimate rule of the galaxy. Everyone knows his or her place, and follow orders of their superiors with a devotion to duty and zealous initiative that any human tyrant would envy. In fact, the Domination is far closer to a cult then a tyranny, for individualism is submerged in a fanatical zeal to fulfill the Valkyrie-supremacist vision.

But the Valkyrie retain enough vestiges of their former personalities to have interests and goals beyond the Destiny of the Race. And as rulers, they usually have enough free time, wealth and energy to indulge them. Valkyrie recognize that the minds and bodies of most species, their own included, require time for rest and relaxation. When a Valkyrie relaxes, he or she often slips into duplicating the habits or interests of the original host's personality. This may be as innocent as taking care of an ornamental garden, or reading mystery tapes for relaxation. But not always. Since Valkyrie hosts house multiple personalities whose ideas of recreation have been twisted by the shock of possession, Domination worlds are far too often the site of activities which normal beings find repugnant or grotesque.

15.5 ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮
POLITICAL STRUCTURE

The Valkyrie are ruled by an all-embracing organization known as the Domination. The Domination is organized as a vast military machine, and all Valkyrie-possessed individuals have military ranks, even if they work in fields such as industry or scientific research. The leadership of the Domination is vested in the High Command, a central council overseeing all Valkyrie military and political activity. Under the High Command are the Director Generals of individual Domination Worlds.

Valkyrie political structure is partially shaped by their means of reproduction. Because Valkyrie live short lives, they have little time to rise through a hierarchy in the conventional sense However, since they also inherit their racial memories, and, to a lesser degree, the skills and experiences of their parent's host, a new adult Valkyrie can be an effective leader.

For this reason, social status is primarily based on the experience of the Valkyrie's current host, and those memories inherited from its parent's and grandparent's hosts. If a person is the Dictator of Hyperion before the Valkyrie take over his planet and possess his body, he is fairly likely to retain that position afterwards. And if the Valkyrie possessing the dictator reproduces and dies, and one of its larvae happens to possess a 10 year old Hyperion street urchin, the Valkyrie in the urchin's body may still inherit the position of world ruler, since it has still has the (somewhat faded) experience of the original dictator to draw upon.

RELIGION AND MYSTICISM

Individuals possessed by the Valkyrie may continue the *forms* of worship out of habit, but the Valkyrie racial mind instinctively believes that it is the supreme force in the universe. No deities or mystic forces can exist, for nothing can be superior to the *Valkyrie*. If any such beings did exist, they too would have to be possessed, or destroyed.

INTERSTELLAR RELATIONS

At present, the Valkyrie dominate a 500 light year globe of space containing some eighty inhabited star systems. The Valkyrie Domination exists within the unexplored zone of space known to the Imperium as the Backnet, but even so, word of their coming has reached the Empire. According to rumor, the Valkyrie have absorbed at least one human Renegade House, and totally assimilated several alien cultures. They also exterminated one entire species, the fluorine-breathing Kai-Nal, who were immune to possession. Their scout-fleets have fought skirmishes with other alien races, notably the Tezcat and the Evantha.

Because of their rapid life cycle (adults fission and retro-metamorph into two larvae every three years) Valkyrie populations increase geometrically. Population expansion is limited only by the supply of hosts, since the reproductive process kills the possessed person. The Valkyrie must rapidly expand from star to star, conquering and absorbing subject populations at an alarming rate. Since they die in only 40 hours without hosts, Valkyrie larvae are sometimes carried in cryogenic suspended animation, to ensure a ready supply to "feed" to captives taken during the invasion process.

Some cultures have tried to make peace with the Valkyrie, offering them cloned bodies to possess. This has not worked, simply because the short-lived Valkyrie prefer bodies whose minds who are already rich in memories they can experience and who possess knowledge and skills that they can use. The Valkyrie are in a constant state of war with all interstellar races they have encountered, the sole exceptions being races such as the Avatar, Shai-en-Rin and Whir-Kohl, whose biochemistries are too different to make compatible hosts and who do not own any planets worth conquering.

At their present rate of expansion, the Valkyrie Domination will not reach the Imperial border for some two centuries, and must pass through several other star-nations to arrive on the Empire's doorstep. For this reason, few in the Imperial government believe that the Valkyrie threat should be considered a major priority. Others, however, are not so sanguine. They point out that if the Valkyrie are permitted to expand unchecked until they directly menace the Imperium or its client states, they will be far larger than the Imperium itself. If the Valkyrie are not stopped soon, they may never be stopped at all.

INFILTRATION OPERATIONS

The Valkyrie prefer to conquer without bloodshed: after all, the native population will be the pool from which their offspring's bodies will be drawn. Why should they reduce the selection? If the planet is poorly defended or primitive, the Valkyrie will simply send in war fleets to overawe the population into surrendering, sometimes after destroying any defending spacecraft as a show of force. But if the High Command believe *any* serious resistance is likely, they will use more subtle means.

A favorite technique involves Valkyrie military ships waiting in ambush around the target world's solar system. Incoming merchant vessels are attacked and boarded, their crews taken captive and possessed by Valkyrie larvae. The ships are then repaired, and resume their voyage, sometimes with an additional cargo of cryogenically frozen Valkyrie larvae.

Once on planet, the hosts will "recruit" more help. The traders may invite a prominent local businessman over to their hotel for a business meeting. He and his companions will be captured, restrained, and possessed. A small child is kidnapped off the street. Later she lures her friends away to play a new game. A few hours later, they come home possessed, each bearing a small box containing a newly defrosted larvae. Comes bedtime, they sneak into their parents' room and open the box next to their bed.

Once they have enough man power, the infiltrating Valkyrie will concentrate on setting up intelligence networks and "processing stations" where people can be possessed. On human worlds, kindergartens, prisons and hospitals will be early targets, for young children, prisoners in their cells, and patients confined to their beds are easy victims for Valkyrie larvae. But the most important targets are members of the government, military and police forces, for if a planet's ruling infrastructure can be dominated, then the rest of the planet can quickly fall. Even if they are discovered early, the Valkyrie hope to be able to cause enough sabotage and confusion that the waiting war fleets can swoop down and seize the system without a serious battle.

There are rumors that some non-possessed humans from lost colonies or renegade houses have cooperated with the Valkyrie. Motives for doing so may vary — some might work for monetary reward, others because friends or relatives have been captured, and are threatened with possession if the quislings fail to do their master's bidding.

15.6
TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

Over the thousands of years that the Domination have been an interstellar power, they have found it much easier to steal technology from newly conquered races then to develop it for themselves. Scientists and engineers who are possessed by Valkyrie tend to be redirected toward refining and standardizing existing technology or analyzing the developments of new subject races rather than coming up with new breakthroughs of their own.

The Domination economy is completely state-controlled and centrally planned for maximum efficiency, from its vast collective farms to gigantic asteroid mining operations and continent-spanning industrial parks. Once they conquer a planet, the Valkyrie will divert a large percentage of the planet's production capacity into manufacturing battle fleets and weapons. Valkyrie industry is geared to supporting the Domination's war machine, and consumer goods and other non-military sectors of the economy are a very low priority. Although the elite Valkyrie live reasonably well, the vast majority of the subject population have few amenities and no luxuries.

15.7
HOMEWORLD

The location of the Valkyrie homeworld is unknown, and there is reason to believe that it was destroyed during an interstellar war, perhaps with one of the first races that the Valkyrie attempted to dominate.

The High Command controls the Domination from within Matrix Prime, an artificial planetoid located in the center of Valkyrie space. Matrix Prime is a military command post, fortress and administrative center, but its most important task is the coordination of hundreds of Tachyon Beam Dictor relay stations vital to the smooth operation of the centrally managed Domination economy. The size of a small moon, it has a population of fifty million Valkyrie, and is heavily fortified and protected with a defensive battle fleet equivalent to an Imperial Starmada.

Matrix Prime is simply one symptom of the Valkyrie desire to place activities under a central control. Another is the designation of entire planets as "administrative centers" or "agricultural worlds." The fate of a planet designated as "production center" is not an attractive one. The Valkyrie are not interested in environmental concerns, only with efficiency. In a few years of industrial development, attractive towns nestled in farmland and carefully managed wilderness can be transformed into dirty factories and crowded warrens squatting in a poisoned wasteland under a polluted atmosphere.

COMMERCE AND CURRENCY

The Domination has no currency, although slave-workers may receive ration coupons. Individual Valkyrie are allowed free access to whatever goods and services they need to carry out their jobs, plus additional perks appropriate to their social status. Because they are supported by a vast slave population, even the lowest ranking Valkyrie soldier or supervisor has a very comfortable standard of living.

Because the Valkyrie are sworn enemies of almost all other star cultures, they engage in little interstellar trade. A few criminals and renegades have been known to deal with them, but the Valkyrie reputation is such that few will risk becoming a host for mere profit. On the opposite side, the occasional free trader has managed to elude Valkyrie patrols to smuggle arms to resistance groups on occupied planets or take on refugees.

WARFARE AND WEAPONRY

A Domination world will have the largest military it can support. The forces the Valkyrie can field are enormous: the Imperial Intelligence Directive estimates that the present Domination battle fleet is three times the size of the Imperial Fleet of Starmadas!

Fortunately for the rest of the galaxy, the Valkyrie are less effective then mere numbers would indicate. Valkyrie are not very innovative, relying on the ships, weapons, and even military organization of those races they have conquered, only making minor improvements for the sake of standardization and ease of production. Because they use copies of other races equipment rather then developing their own, their military technology always lags behind their more advanced opponents. Valkyrie can be vulnerable to the sudden development of new weapon systems, and unless they can steal or capture plans or working examples, it may be a long time before they develop proper countermeasures.

The High Command tries to staff its war fleets and armies with Valkyrie whose hosts have military experience, but the habit of breaking into multiple personalities under stress limits their effectiveness in a shooting war. To counter this problem, Valkyrie too often rely on computer control and rigid battle plans to the detriment of original tactics. Typically, Valkyrie forces (whether a platoon or an entire Starmada) will attempt a single, brilliantly conceived ambush or trap, and then if it fails, revert to bloody-minded wave attacks, relying on force of numbers to carry the day. A non-Valkyrie commander who can outguess the Valkyrie's initial stratagem can often outmaneuver and outfight the confused mass assaults that follow.

On the other hand, superior numbers do sometimes win.

15.8
ADVENTURE SUGGESTIONS

The most exciting adventure involving the Valkyrie may involve the characters discovering a Valkyrie attempt to infest a planet they are living on or visiting. Play this like the movie *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. At first, the characters see suspicious characters acting strangely and some of their friends begin to exhibit weird multiple personalities. The characters investigate, and soon come to the realization that this is a Valkyrie invasion. Perhaps they discover a plot to take over high ranking military officials or find a hidden Valkyrie base containing cryogenic tanks full of frozen larvae. If they survive the initial encounter, the PCs can try to warn the skeptical local and Imperial authorities — some of whom may have already been taken over. If that fails, they can take matters into their own hands, trying to stop the aliens before they can infest enough people to make the invasion a success.

15.9
SYSTEM NOTES

When an individual is possessed by a Valkyrie, he or she retains all current skills and characteristics *plus* the skills and memories of the hosts of the parent and grandparent Valkyries. To simulate this in game terms, it is necessary to draw up character sheets for the previous two characters as well (along with notes on their personalities in case they become dominant).

Valkyrie rapidly consume their hosts. To simulate this, a Valkyrie will be at -10 on all rolls after 2 years, and -20 after three years. After three years have passes, a RR vs. level 10 poison should be made each month, with failure indicating collapse, followed by death.

A variety of techniques existing for saving a possessed person from possession. The Imperium and other races have developed injections of micro-organisms that can kill Valkyrie without harming their hosts. Unfortunately, this only works out well if the larva has not yet become a full adult: once it has, the Valkyrie permanently alters the victim's brain chemistry. At that point, injecting the host will then kill the Valkyrie organism, preventing it fissioning, but will leave the dominant "racial mind" and any other personalities encoded into the victim's RNA.

Valkyrie larvae are small, harmless creatures who cannot successfully attack an alert individual. To kill one, a character need only pick it up and pull it apart (1 hit). However, they are hard to spot (+50 Stalk and Hide), and they can easily possess a sleeping individual. GMs may wish to give sleeping characters a Perception roll vs. the larva's Stalk and Hide skill to see if the character feels the Valkyrie crawling onto his or her body in time to stop it.

PART II — ALIEN CREATURES

NATURAL ATTACKS USING CLAW LAW

One thing that has been missing from the **Space Master** game system has been a comprehensive system for resolving the natural or inherent attacks of beasts (alien or otherwise). Though **Space Master** does provide a generic Melee Attack Table, this does not allow for enough diversity to portray the differences between claw, tooth and stinger attacks.

Fortunately, **Rolemaster** (**SM's** sister game) includes a detailed system for resolving animal attacks called *Claw Law*. Much of the material from *Claw Law* is reproduced here, in *Aliens & Artifacts*, so that you can incorporate inherent animal attack forms into your game when required.

16.1
THE CLAW LAW TABLES

The *Claw Law* tables we've selected to put in *Aliens & Artifacts* are grouped in an Appendix at the back of this book. When you have a look at them, you'll find that they are very similar to the sort of attack tables found in **SM's** *Tech Book*. As you can guess, they're used in very much the same way. The *Claw Law* tables have result thresholds just like the *Tech Book* tables do, but instead of a weapon's Mark # forming the threshold, it is the "size" of the animal attack which does so.

The progression of animal attack sizes is: Small, Medium, Large, and Huge. In the following sections, you will find that alien creature attacks are quantified by their "size" rating. For instance, a Huge Bite attack will be more deadly than Small one, and will therefore be delivered by a much larger creature.

Below is a listing of the *Claw Law* tables we've included for you in the *Aliens & Artifacts* Appendix.

Claw Law Table Listing
CL Table 1 Beak/Pincer Attack Table
CL Table 2 Bite Attack Table
CL Table 3 Claw/Talon Attack Table
CL Table 4 Grapple/Grasp/Envelop/Swallow Attack Table
CL Table 5 Horn/Tusk Attack Table
CL Table 6 Ram/Butt/Bash/Knock Down/Slug Attack Table
CL Table 7 Stinger Attack Table
CL Table 8 Tiny Animal Attack Table
CL Table 9 Trample/Stomp Attack Table
CL Table 10 Tiny Animal Critical Strike Table
CL Table 11 Unbalance Critical Strike Table
CL Table 12 Large Critical Strike Table
CL Table 13 Super Large Critical Strike Table

Large and Super Large Creatures

Some beasts are so big and/or powerful that the normal critical strike tables are not used when they receive critical strikes. These creatures are separated into two categories: Large, and Super Large creatures.

Each type has its own critical strike table that is consulted if a sufficiently severe critical is obtained against it. The roll for criticals against Large and Super Large creatures is high open-ended.

Large Creature Critical Strikes — Only critical strikes of severity 'B', 'C', 'D', or 'E' affect large creatures. 'A' severity criticals are ignored by these beasts. Note that the severity of the original critical result is irrelevant, except that it must be of 'B' severity or higher. This reflects the fact that such creatures present such a large target that they are much more difficult to seriously hurt.

Super Large Creature Critical Strikes — Only critical strikes of severity 'D', or 'E' affect large creatures. 'A', 'B', and 'C', severity criticals are ignored by these beasts.

Categories for Large and Super Large Critical Strikes — When resolving a critical against a Large or Super Large beast, use the column on the table which most closely represents the attack form being used. "Melee" weapons include archaic and contemporary melee, thrown or bow weapons. "Projectile" weapons include slug throwers, rocket guns and MLA firearms. "Energy" weapons include lasers, blasters and disruptors. "Explosives" include grenade and mine detonations, as well as warheads delivered by missile launchers and the like. Finally, the "Slaying" column is used for any other very devastating attack form, including attacks which the given creature is particularly susceptible to.

16.2
RESOLVING CLAW LAW ATTACKS AGAINST SPACE MASTER ARMOR TYPES

Space Master players are well aware of the distinctions made on the *Tech Book* attack tables between **Rolemaster** and **Space Master** armor types. Though **RM** and **SM** armors utilize the same numbering scheme, it is understood that **SM** ATs 5-20 are sturdier and more protective than **RM** ATs 5-20 due to their superior design and utilization of advanced materials.

Because the *Claw Law* tables were designed for use with **RM** armor types, it is necessary to make a slight adjustment when resolving a *Claw Law* attack against someone wearing **SM** armor.

Special Rule

If the subject of a *Claw Law* attack is wearing **SM** armor type from 5 through 20, reduce the "size" of the *Claw Law* attack by one threshold.

Example: *A character is attacked by a Snow Kraken. This arctic ecosystem beast normally delivers Large Claw attacks. However, if the character is wearing a Space Master Light Body Armor, Mesh Armored Bodysuit, or an Armored Exoskeleton (SM ATs 5-20), the Snow Kraken's attacks are resolved as if they were Medium Claw attacks, not Large.*

A *Claw Law* attack can never be reduced below the "Small" threshold. That is, a Medium attack might be reduced to Small, but a Small attack could not be further reduced.

Also, Tiny Animal attacks *ignore* the special restrictions of **Space Master** armor types.

17.0
POISONS AND THEIR EFFECTS

Many alien beasts (as well as those closer to home) utilize poison as a natural attack or defense form. The guidelines in this section will help the GM incorporate poisons into his game, whether they are used by animals or characters.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Poisons come in many forms and involve myriad effects. Actually, they count any substance which destroys life or impairs health from within the victim, regardless of the ultimate result.

The guidelines here relate to poisons specifically associated with living creatures. In this case, a poison's source and form will depend on the plant, beast, or alien that uses it. Creature-based poisons are described using the following criteria:

1) The attack level (in terms of a base level and a variability factor);

2) The type of effect; and sometimes

3) The degree of severity (which includes restrictions, modifications, or ranges pertaining to the severity of effect).

Often the attack level of a poison is given as a base attack level and a variability code (A-H) in parentheses. This variability refers to the Poison Level Variability Chart.

POISON LEVEL VARIABILITY CHART

Roll	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
≤ 01			Poison is Ineffective					-3
02-10	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-10	-2
11-15	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-8	-2
16-20	0	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-6	-1
21-25	0	0	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-1
26-35	0	0	0	0	-1	-2	-2	-1
36-45	0	0	0	0	0	-1	-1	0
46-55	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
56-65	0	0	0	0	0	+1	+1	0
66-75	0	0	0	0	+1	+2	+2	+1
76-80	0	0	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+1
81-85	0	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+6	+1
86-90	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+8	+2
91-100	+1	+1	+2	+4	+5	+6	+10	+2
101-140	+1	+1	+2	+5	+6	+7	+11	+3
141-170	+1	+2	+3	+6	+7	+8	+12	+3
171-190	+1	+2	+4	+7	+8	+9	+13	+3
191-200	+2	+3	+5	+8	+9	+10	+14	+3
201-250	+2	+4	+6	+9	+10	+11	+15	+3
251-300	+3	+5	+7	+10	+11	+12	+16	+4
> 300	+4	+6	+8	+11	+12	+13	+17	+4

To determine the actual attack level of a poison, first roll (1-100 open-ended) and cross-index the result with the poison's "variability" code letter. The resulting modification is then added to the "base attack level" of the poison to obtain the actual attack level. For simplicity purposes, a Gamemaster may wish to just use the base attack level as the actual attack level.

When designing your own poisons, you need to consider these factors, as well as noting any peculiarities the poison might have (e.g., attack bonuses).

17.1
TYPES OF EFFECTS

For convenience's sake, we classify poisons in six effect categories:

- Circulatory Poisons
- Nerve Poisons
- Conversion Poisons
- Reduction Poisons
- Muscle Poisons
- Respiratory Poisons

Each is a grouping of substances which share common symptoms and means of attack, and work toward the same detrimental aim. All poisons in a given category affect a given system in the victim's body. Essentially, circulatory poisons disturb the system which moves blood and lymph through the body. Conversion poisons transform fluids or tissue into a new form, muscle poisons attack the tissues and organs which produce movement, and nerve poisons disrupt the body's signalling mechanisms. Reduction poisons dissolve tissue, while respiratory poisons retard a victim's ability to take in oxygen and give off carbon dioxide.

17.2
SEVERITY OF EFFECTS

Within these categories are four levels of severity that determine the degree of harm to the victim: mild, moderate, severe, and extreme. Normally, the degree of severity is based on the potential victim's resistance roll (RR), but the description of the poison or circumstance may dictate otherwise. If two or more means of determining severity are specified (e.g., the victim must make a RR and a roll based on his Con), resolve each and apply the most severe result.

RR-BASED SEVERITY

Generally, a person receiving a critical strike in an attack that is accompanied by a poison must make a RR (using the standard RR table found in the *Player Book* on page 95), comparing his own level with the level of the poison. When an unfortunate soul fails a RR, the GM should determine how much of a failure is involved by comparing the adjusted RR with the number needed to succeed. Generally the victim adds his Constitution stat bonus and his Race bonus to the RR. Unless the poison attack is described otherwise (e.g., the poison delivers only mild effects or the effects are not RR dependent), the difference indicates the resulting level of severity.

RR failure		Severity level
01-25	=	Mild
26-50	=	Moderate
51-100	=	Serious
101+	=	Extreme

CONSTITUTION-BASED SEVERITY

Some poisons affect the victim in ways which are independent of his level. Instead, the victim's fate is a factor of his constitution, or even his luck.

In the case of constitution-based results, the determination begins with a single closed-end D100 roll that determines whether or not the poison affects the target. Individual poisons may modify the roll (e.g., a +20 venom would subtract 20 from the roll). The potential victim adds his Con stat score to the roll, hoping for an adjusted result of

101+. Should he get result of 100 or less, the poison affects him and another closed D100 roll is made. Severity levels are based on the second roll:

Roll		Severity Level
01-15	=	Extreme
16-40	=	Serious
41-80	=	Moderate
81-10	=	Mild

Luck-based Severity

Luck-based effects are determined by a single closed-end D100 roll. These poisons are often very powerful substances which will harm anyone unfortunate enough to experience their insinuation. Typically, the poison will affect anyone, should the roll fall into the "affect range." For instance, a poison which will effect anyone on roll of 01-10 attacks a 20th level Armsman with the same vigor as it does a 1st lvl Researcher. All targets are equally vulnerable. As with any poison, however, the effects of such an attack can be negated if the victim possesses special powers, items, or immunities.

The severity of effect may be specified, or it can be a function of the roll; the lower the roll, the more severe the result. We suggest the following ranges for severities versus rolls. They serve as handy examples.

Affect Range	Severity Ranges
• 01-50	01-05 = Extreme; 06-15 = Severe; 16-30 = Moderate; 31-50 = Mild
• 01-25	01-03 = Extreme; 04-10 = Severe; 11-17 = Moderate; 18-25 = Mild
• 01-10	01-02 = Extreme; 03-05 = Severe; 05-07 = Moderate; 08-10 = Mild.
• 01-05	01 = Extreme; 02 = Severe; 03 = Moderate; 04-05 = Mild.

The GM should remember that, while most poisons are limited by their purity or concentration (i.e., level), some yield effects restricted to lesser severity levels (e.g., the effects are never worse than moderate, for instance).

17.3 ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮
DESCRIPTIONS OF EFFECTS

The following descriptions delineate the impact of each variety of poison, based on severity level. Effects are generally cumulative, so a victim beset with two impairments reducing his activity by -25 each, is actually at -50. A victim experiencing severe effects must also weather moderate and mild effects. In other words, the effects of upper level severities include all the lower severity results in the same category.

Time of Effect: The time at which an effect sets in is variable; however, greater effects cannot precede lesser effects, although they can be simultaneous. GMs should roll the time for the most severe effect first, thereby dictating the upper limit for lesser symptoms.

Area of Effect: The area affected by a poison often varies as well. Sometimes the victim's actions, or the location of the poison attack, dictates the point of entry and the area first affected (e.g., a maneuver or critical strike indicates that the snake injects the nerve poison in the victim's leg), but occasionally there will be no indication of the initially affected spot. In this case, use the following Poison Effect Location Chart

POISON EFFECT LOCATION CHART

Poison Variety	Areas Affected (Suggested Sequence)
Circulatory	Feet, legs, hands, arms, abdomen, chest, neck, and head.
Conversion	Kidneys, bowels, intestines, stomach, liver, lungs, heart, throat, brain, legs, and arms.
Muscle	Hands, arms, shoulders, feet, legs, hips, jaw, nose, ears, eyes, bowels, and heart.
Nerve	Extremities, eyes, mouth, and brain.
Reduction	Kidneys, bowels, intestines, stomach, liver, lungs, heart, throat, brain, legs, and arms.
Respiratory	Lungs, throat, and brain.

Poison Effect Descriptions

The following descriptions are general in nature. Specific effects of certain poisons will vary, even if classified according to these categories. For poison descriptions located elsewhere in *Space Master*, treat the stated effect as extreme, only applying the mild, moderate, or severe effects from this chart if the victim's RR indicates that a lesser severity level is justified.

Circulatory Poisons

Mild: Beginning in 1-50 rnds and lasting 1-50 hours: swelling around the point of injection or ingestion; drowsiness (-15); slightly blurred vision (-25).

Moderate: Beginning in 3-30 rnds: lessening of motor coordination in legs (-25 for leg maneuvers) and arms (-25 for hand maneuvers); mild euphoria (-20).

Severe: Beginning in 5-50 rnds: discoloration and chills; incapacitating headaches (no activity; 1-10 hits/rnd until unconsciousness or coma).

Extreme: Beginning in 10-100 rnds: death due to circulatory failure (i.e., oxygen starvation and associated waste poisoning).

Conversion Poisons

Mild: Beginning in 5-50 rnds: Queasiness and an upset stomach (2-20 hits; -20).

Moderate: Beginning in 10-100 rnds: painful vomiting (3-30 hits; 10% chance of incapacity each round).

Severe: Beginning in 2-200 rnds: partial conversion (1-100%) of bodily tissue to another form (with associated disability; death if area affected is a critical organ); victim at -51 to -100; lapse into unconsciousness 1-50 rnds after initial severe effect.

Extreme: Beginning in 20-200 rnds: complete transformation of bodily tissue to another form; death if area affected critical to survival.

Muscle Poisons

Mild: Beginning in 3-30 rnds: lightheadedness and swelling (-10); pain (1-5 hits/rnd).

Moderate: Beginning in 5-50 rnds: moderate loss of overall coordination (-30); in any given round, there is 5% chance muscles necessary to given action will not operate.

Severe: Beginning in 1-10 hours: fever and sweating; lapse into unconsciousness for 1-10 days.

Extreme: Beginning in 1-50 hours: death due to overall muscle failure (e.g., cessation of heart activity).

Nerve Poisons

Mild: Beginning in 1-10 rnds: mild loss of thought and motor coordination (-30).

Moderate: Beginning in 1-20 rnds: nervous system shock (5-50 hits; -75).

Severe: Beginning in 2-20 rnds: stroke (-100); temporary stats reduced by 1-80 (D100 roll, ignoring 81-100).

Extreme: Beginning in 2-50 rnds: death due to brain failure.

Reduction Poisons

Mild: Beginning in 10-100 rnds: great pain (4 hits/rnd until unconscious).

Moderate: Beginning in 20-200 rnds: bleeding through pores (3 hits/rnd).

Severe: Beginning in 30-300 rnds: incapacitation; after 1-100 minutes lapse into coma lasting 1-100 days.

Extreme: Beginning in 1-10 hours: death due to dissolution of vital tissue and destruction of associated organs (e.g., liver reduced to fluid).

Respiratory Poisons

Mild: Beginning in 1-20 rnds: mild euphoria (-20).

Moderate: Beginning in 2-20 rnds: significant euphoria (-50); choking pain (1-5 hits/rnd for 1-100 rnds).

Severe: Beginning in 1-100 rnds: uncontrollable coughing (1-10 hits/rnd for 1-10 rnds); lapse into unconsciousness; 50% chance of coma for 1-10 days.

Extreme: Beginning in 2-200 rnds: death due to respiratory failure and associated oxygen starvation.

RANDOM POISON DETERMINATION

If you want to randomly determine a poison for any reason (e.g., for a creature you are creating, or for a poisoned weapon, for instance), roll twice and consult the Random Poison Chart. The first roll generates the poison type, while the second roll indicates the poison severity factors.

RANDOM POISON CHART			
First Roll	Poison Type	Second Roll	Severity Factors
01-05	Special	01-30	RR-based: Creature's Lvl
06-20	Circulatory	31-50	RR-based: Lvl 3, var. H
21-35	Conversion	51-60	RR-based: Lvl 8, var. H
36-50	Muscle	61-65	RR-based: Lvl 13, var. H
51-65	Nerve	66-67	RR-based: Lvl 25, var. G
66-80	Reduction	68-75	Constitution-based (-20)
81-95	Respiratory	76-80	Constitution-based (+0)
96-100	Special	81-84	Constitution-based (+10)
		85-87	Constitution-based (+25)
		88-89	Constitution-based (+50)
		90	Constitution-based (+75)
		91-94	Luck-based: Range (01-05)
		95-97	Luck-based: Range (01-10)
		98-99	Luck-based: Range (01-25)
		100	Luck-based: Range (01-50)

18.0

CREATURE STATISTICS AND CODES

Sections 20.0 through 30.0 contain descriptions of a variety of alien beasts. Before attempting to use the statistics provided for each creature, a Gamemaster should read sub-sections 18.1 through 18.5, which contain the codes used in the creature charts.

The statistics given describe typical or average creatures. Many statistics for a given creature are actually given for a family of related beasts. Individual species of such a family may be smaller, larger, faster, and so on. All statistics should be altered to better fit the GM's view of his own universal scheme, if that is necessary.

Additional codes provide a Gamemaster with guidelines for generating creatures which vary from the average in terms of level, hits, bonuses, etc. These additional statistics can be ignored when a Gamemaster does not want to — or have time to — generate each creature encountered.

The following sub-sections break down the various statistical categories of the creature descriptions, and explain the codes used throughout.

18.1
TYPE

This is the generally accepted name for the given type of creature. They are not scientific designations, but rather "local" terms of reference. The same creature may be known by several different names, depending on the culture it lives in proximity with.

18.2
LEVEL

Lvl: The number given here is the level of an average creature of the given type; it is primarily used for determining the creature's hits, attacks, experience point value and Resistance Rolls. If the GM wishes, he may use the Level Chart given below to vary the exact level of the creature; just roll (open-ended) and cross-index with the letter (Level Code) given in the statistics. The result is added to the average level to give the creature's actual level. If a negative level is obtained, just use level 0. Creatures with lower levels than average can be considered to be the "young" of their type, while those with higher than average levels can be the "leaders" or "venerable adults."

LEVEL CHART

Roll	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
<01	Young helpless creature (e.g., baby)							-3
01-10	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-10	-2
11-15	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-8	-2
16-20	0	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-6	-1
21-25	0	0	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-1
26-35	0	0	0	0	-1	-2	-2	-1
36-45	0	0	0	0	0	-1	-1	0
46-55	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
56-65	0	0	0	0	0	+1	+1	0
66-75	0	0	0	0	+1	+2	+2	+1
76-80	0	0	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+1
81-85	0	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+6	+1
86-90	0	+1	+1	+3	+4	+5	+8	+2
91-100	+1	+1	+2	+4	+5	+6	+10	+2
101-140	+1	+1	+2	+5	+6	+7	+11	+3
141-170	+1	+2	+3	+6	+7	+8	+12	+3
171-190	+1	+2	+4	+7	+8	+9	+13	+3
191-200	+2	+3	+5	+8	+9	+10	+14	+3
201-250	+2	+4	+6	+9	+10	+11	+15	+3
251-300	+3	+5	+7	+10	+11	+12	+16	+4
>300	+4	+6	+8	+11	+12	+13	+17	+4

The **Level Code from the Statistic Tables** header spans columns A through H.

18.3

MOVEMENT STATS

These movement statistics assume average quickness and encumbrance for the particular creature, and may be adjusted as necessary for special cases.

A creature's actual movement rate is determined by its Base Rate as modified by his "Pace" (up to its Max Pace) and possibly a maneuver roll using his MM Bonus (Movement and Maneuver Bonus). To determine a creature's movement rate for a given round, the Gamemaster should first decide on the creature's pace (up to the maximum allowed) and then the base movement rate can be multiplied by the movement rate multiplier given in the Pace Chart below.

A creature's pace also determines how many exhaustion points it uses each round. A creature's exhaustion points is dependent upon its Constitution; the process for determining exhaustion points is given in the Base Hits section when Constitution is discussed.

PACE CHART

Code	Pace	Movement Rate/Pace Multiplier	Normal Maneuver Difficulty	Exhaustion Pt. Cost
Walk	Walk	1x	None	1/30 rnd
Jog	Fast Walk / Jog	1.5x	Routine	1/6 rnd
Run	Run	2x	Easy	1/2 rnd
Spt	Sprint / Fast Run	3x	Light	5/rnd
FSpt	Fast Sprint	4x	Medium	25/rnd
Dash	Dash	5x	Hard	40/rnd
Var	Varies	—	—	—

Base Rate: A creature's base movement rate is the distance in *meters* which the creature may normally move each round at a "walking" pace. Base rates greater than 0 but less than 1 m/rnd are given as 1 (usually Tiny creatures).

Max Pace: The Pace given in the statistics is the maximum allowed pace for the given animal.

MM Bonus: The Movement and Maneuver Bonus is used if the GM requires a maneuver roll to move at paces greater than a walk. The GM should first total the maneuver roll and the MM Bonus; and then he should obtain a result from the Personal Maneuver Chart provided in the *Player Book* by cross-indexing this total and the normal maneuver difficulty for the given pace (see Pace Chart above for suggested difficulties). The result is the percentage of the creature's movement rate which is actually covered.

Distance Moved =

Base Rate x Pace Multiplier x (Maneuver Chart Result / 100)

Speed (MS/AQ): A creature's Speed is given in terms of "Movement Speed / Attack Quickness." Movement Speed helps determine a creature's "Base Defensive Bonus", while Attack Quickness determines a creature's "first strike points." Both factors can be used to determine a creature's Defensive Bonus (DB) in various tactical situations. The DBs given in this product already include the Base DB, but they do not include any modifications for Charge/Lunge or Flee/Evade maneuvers.

SPEED CHART

Code	Rate	(MS) Base DB	(MS) Flee/ Evade	(AQ) Charge/ Lunge	(AQ) First Strike Pts
IN	Inching	-25	0	0	5
CR	Creeping	-20	0	0	10
VS	Very Slow	-10	0	0	20
SL	Slow	0	0	0	50
MD	Medium	10	5	-5	85
MF	Moderately Fast	20	10	-10	97
FA	Fast	30	15	-15	101
VF	Very Fast	40	20	-20	110
BF	Blindingly Fast	50	25	-20	120

The **Defensive Bonus Mods** header spans the four value columns.

18.4

COMBAT STATS

Size: This is the size of the given type of creature: "T"=Tiny, "S"=Small, "M"=Medium, "L"=Large, and "H"=Huge. This is merely an approximation of the creature's size with Medium being about man-sized.

Crit: This statistic indicates how critical strikes inflicted on the given type of creature are resolved. In some cases more than one of these codes apply. Consult the Critical Codes Chart.

CRITICAL CODES CHART

Critical Code	Code Effect
—	Use normal critical procedure.
I	Decrease critical severity by one ("A" is modified by -20, "B" becomes an "A", "C" becomes a "B", etc.).
II	Decrease critical severity by two ("A" is modified by -50, "B" is modified by -20 on the 'A' column, "C" becomes an "A", etc.).
LA	Use Large Creature Criticals.
SL	Use Super Large Creature Criticals.
@	Stun results do not affect creature.
#	Stun results and hits/rnd do not affect creature.

Base Hits: A creature's Base Hits is the number of concussion hits which an average creature of the given type can absorb before becoming unconscious. If the Gamemaster wishes he may use the Constitution Bonus Chart given below to vary the exact number of hits that the creature can take; just roll on the column indicated by the letter given under "Base Hits" in the creature's statistics. The resulting Constitution Bonus (Con Bonus) is given at the left of the chart; this bonus, read as a percentage penalty or bonus, is added to the creature's Base Hits to obtain the total hits which that specific creature can take. A resulting hit total of less than one is treated as one. No letter accompanying the Base Hits statistic indicates no change is possible.

CONSTITUTION BONUS CHART

Con Bonus	Base Hits Code from the Statistic Tables							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
-25	—	—	01	01	01	01	01	01
-20	—	01	02-03	02	02	02	02	02
-15	01	02-04	04-08	03-04	03-04	03	03	03
-10	02-09	05-11	09-23	05-09	05-09	04-05	04	04
-5	10-25	12-31	24-74	10-24	10-24	06-10	05-06	05
0	26-74	32-69	75-89	25-74	25-72	11-25	07-11	06-07
+5	75-91	70-89	90-94	75-89	73-87	26-72	12-26	08-12
+10	92-99	90-96	95-97	90-94	88-92	73-87	27-71	13-27
+15	100	97-99	98-99	95-97	93-95	88-92	72-86	28-72
+20	—	100	100	98-99	96-97	93-95	87-91	73-88
+25	—	—	—	100	98	96-97	92-94	89-93
+30	—	—	—	—	99	98	95-96	94-96
+35	—	—	—	—	100	99	97-98	97-98
+45	—	—	—	—	—	100	99	99
+60	—	—	—	—	—	—	100	100
Hits per Level Difference								
	1	2	3	5	8	10	12	15
Bonus Exhaustion Points								
	0	0	0	0	+50	+100	+150	+200

Varying Hits due to Level Differences: In addition, a creature's hits can vary if its level differs from the given average level. If a specimen is of a higher level than the norm, it will have more hits. If its level is below the norm for the creature type, then it will have fewer hit points. Just multiply the "Hits per Level Difference" given in the Constitution Bonus Chart by the difference between the actual level of the creature and the average level for its type. This product is then added to (or subtracted from) the previous hit total to obtain the creature's new hit total.

Total Hits =

Base Hits + Con Bonus % +/- [(Level Diff.)x(Hits/Level Diff.)]

Exhaustion Points: To determine the number of exhaustion points initially available to an creature, again use the Constitution Bonus Chart. Use the creature's Base Hits code (the letter given after its Base Hits) and the Constitution Bonus Roll to determine the creature's Constitution Bonus. The creature's available exhaustion points are obtained by adding the creature's Constitution, its Constitution Bonus, and its Bonus Exhaustion Points based upon its Base Hits code — also available at the bottom of the Constitution Bonus Chart.

Exhaustion Points =

Constitution + Con Bonus + Bonus Exhaustion Points

AT: The first number in this entry is the creature's *Rolemaster* (not *Space Master*) armor type equivalent:

1 = Skin/Cloth	11 = Half-Hide Plate
2 = Robes	12 = Full-Hide Plate
3 = Light Hide	13 = Chain Shirt
4 = Heavy Hide	14 = Chain Shirt & Greaves
5 = Leather Jerkin	15 = Full Chain
6 = Leather Coat	16 = Chain Hauberk
7 = Reinforced Leather Coat	17 = Metal Breastplate
8 = Rein. Full-Length Leather Coat	18 = Metal Breastplate & Greaves
9 = Rigid Leather Breastplate	19 = Half Plate
10 = Rigid Lthr Breastplate & Greaves	20 = Full Plate

DB: The number in parenthesis under this entry is the creature's Defensive Bonus. It is given for that creature's average quickness and may need to be adjusted in exceptional cases.

Primary/Secondary/Tertiary Attacks: These statistics indicate how a creature attacks using the *Claw Law* tables. Usually, a number of attacks are given for each creature separated by slashes, "/". Each creature usually initiates combat using one of these attacks, with a general preference for the Primary attack form. During later rounds, the same or other attacks may be used depending upon the situation or success of earlier attacks as indicated by the codes which follow below.

Each attack is usually described by the following statistics:

1) Offensive Bonus: The first number is the Offensive Bonus for that attack.

2) Attack Type: The letter codes which follow the first number indicate the attack type.

For most inherent animal attacks, the first letter indicates the "size" of the attack:

S = Small   M = Medium   L = Large   H = Huge

The next two (or three) letters indicate the type of organic weaponry attack:

Ba = Bash/Ram/Butt/ Knock Down/Slug	Mst = Martial Arts Striking
Bi = Bite	Pi = Pincer/Beak
Cl = Claw/Talon	St = Stinger
Cr = Crush/Fall	Ti = Tiny Animal
Gr = Grapple/Grasp/ Envelop/Swallow	Ts = Trample/Stomp
Msw = Martial Arts Sweeps & Throws	Ho = Horn/Tusk
	We = Weapon

3) Additional Information: Finally, the last element in the attack code gives additional information concerning the attack pattern, number of attacks, damage, etc. Codes in parentheses or brackets indicate special attributes of that particular attack, while the other codes indicate the creature's overall attack pattern. What follows is a summary of these suffix codes.

Nothing — If no code is given after the attack type, that is the only attack option for the creature.

Number — This number is the percentage chance of this particular attack being used. All of these numbers for a creature's Primary, Secondary and/or Tertiary attacks will add up to 100, so that one D100 roll can be made to determine which attack is used. Therefore, if an attack entry is 50LBi60/50LCl40, there is a 60% chance that the beast

will use its Large Bite attack, while there is a 40% chance that it will use its Large Claw attack. Roll each round to see which one is used.

« — If the attack given to the immediate left has obtained a non-Tiny critical, this attack occurs in the same round of combat as the attack which obtained that critical.

√ — If the attack given on the left has obtained a non-Tiny critical, this attack will occur on the next round of combat after the attack which obtained that critical.

(#) — If this number, #, of creatures attack as a group, this attack may be used. For example, (10) indicates that if 10 of these creatures attack as a group they may use the given attack.

(#x) — This number, #, indicated how many times this attack may be made in a given round. That is, (2x) is two attacks per round, (3x) is three attacks per round, etc. Usually no more than two of these attacks may be used against any one foe, but a successful maneuver roll may allow the creature to use more.

(#D) — This number, #, indicates by how much to increase the concussion hit damage normally delivered by this attack. Just multiply the normal hits given by the number, #. That is, (2D) is double damage, (3D) is triple damage, etc.

(Critical) — If this attack inflicts a critical, the given critical type is used instead of the normal critical. The critical codes are:

S = Slash	ST = Martial Arts Strikes
P = Puncture	SW = Martial Arts Sweeps
K = Krush	E = Electricity
U = Unbalance	I = Impact
G = Grappling	C = Cold
T = Tiny Animals	H = Heat

[Critical] — If the attack inflicts a critical, the given critical type is used in addition to the normal critical. The critical codes are as given above.

"All" or "Both" attacks indicate that all of the other listed attacks may be made in the same round.

"Poison" indicates that the attack involves the injection/insinuation of a toxin into the target, as detailed in the creature's descriptive text.

"Special" attacks are usually detailed in the text for that particular type of creature.

"Psion" indicates that the attack involves a psion or telepathic effect, as detailed in the creature's descriptive text.

VARYING OFFENSIVE BONUSES DUE TO LEVEL DIFFERENCES

A creature's Offensive Bonuses can vary if its level differs from the creature type's average level. Just multiply the difference between the actual level of the creature and the average level for its type by three. This product is then added to (or subtracted from) the creature's Offensive Bonuses to obtain the creature's true Offensive Bonuses.

Actual Offensive Bonus =
Offensive Bonus +/- (Lvl Difference x 3)

18.5
ENCOUNTER STATS

 # Enc: This is the size range of a typical group of the creatures when encountered. A pack will often contain a wide range of levels/ages (including some young). A GM should vary the number encountered based upon the game situation and location of the encounter.

Outlook: This code is meant to be a general measure of the creature's outlook, attitude, demeanor, and/or reaction/behavior pattern. What follows is a listing of the various outlook codes.

Aggres — Aggressive and will attack if provoked or hungry.

Aloof — Ignores other creatures unless interfered with, or attacked.

Altru — Altruistic, has an unselfish regard for the interests of others, often to the extent of risking his own safety.

Bellig — Belligerent, often attacks without provocation.

Berserk — Attacks closest living creature until it is destroyed.

Carefree — Does not believe that danger or misfortune exists for it.

Cruel — Not only hostile, but delights in death, pain, and suffering.

Domin — Desires power, attempts to control or dominate other creatures.

Good — Opposed to "evil" (e.g., those who are cruel, hostile, belligerent, etc.); supportive of those who are also good.

Greedy — Will attack or attempt to steal from other creatures if the risk does not seem too high.

Hostile — Normally attacks other creatures on sight.

Hungry — If hungry, will attack anything edible; otherwise Normal.

Inquis — Inquisitive and curious; will approach and examine unusual situations.

Jumpy — Normally bolts at any sign of other creatures.

Normal — Watches and is wary of other creatures; will sometimes attack if hungry.

Passive — Ignores the presence of other creatures unless threatened.

Playful — Mischievous, but playful; will attempt to play with or play pranks on other creatures.

Protect — Protective of a thing, place, other creature, etc.

Timid — Skittish around other creatures, runs at the slightest hint of danger.

These descriptions are merely guidelines which the Gamemaster should modify based upon the situation, the actions of player characters, and the GM's reaction rolls.

IQ: This is a measure of the beast's reasoning and memory ability. The statistic is not normally given for animals since their actions are often based upon instinct, or very low order intelligence. The IQ codes are given in general categories which approximate human equivalents. To convert from the coded categories to an equivalent Reasoning and/ or Memory stat score, use the following Intelligence Chart.

INTELLIGENCE CHART

IQ Code	Reasoning/ Memory Stat	IQ Code	Reasoning/ Memory Stat
NO = none	Animal Instincts	AV = average	35-65
VL = very low	1-5	AA = above avg	50-77
LO = low	3-12	SU = superior	60-86
LI = little	7-25	HI = high	80-98
IN = inferior	13-40	VH = very high	94-99
MD = mediocre	23-50	EX = exceptional	100-102

ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS

This section describes many different non-intelligent or semi-intelligent alien creatures, grouped by ecosystem into their most likely natural habitats. The Earth-like ecosystems are arctic, desert, forest, jungle, marsh, prairie, deep water, and shallow water.

The non-terrestrial ecosystems are Exotic (worlds with poisonous atmospheres or gravity extremes), Gas Giant (the ecologies found in the upper reaches of Jovian atmospheres, such as the Sheol homeworld), and Vacuum (exotic creatures making their home in deep space, asteroid belts, or on worlds with very thin or nonexistent atmospheres).

It is perfectly all right to use the same creature on several different worlds. Perhaps they have been transplanted by humans or aliens for economic reasons. Even nasty pests and carnivores may be vital in the ecology of other, more congenial life forms. Or they may have spread by accident, carried by unwary starships.

You can also recycle creatures' statistics by simply changing a few facets of the description. To give Ice Scorpions a new lease of life, try giving them deep blue skin, a large spikey crest, and poison mandibles instead of a tail sting. When the meet the Blue Horrors in the local marsh, the PCs will never know they aren't a totally new creature!

ORCHESTRATING ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS

Alien animals may be potential obstacles to any group. They may also be the targets of hunters, for sport or because they possess valuable body parts. But animals are also important on more settled worlds, where colonists will be in the process of taming the native ecosystem. A few species may be dangerous, either to the colonist or to his crops and domestic animals, so attempts will be made to eradicate or control them, perhaps with a bounty.

Not all encounters need to take place in the wilderness: creatures can be useful as domestic animals, sources of natural products such as meat, wool or eggs, or are trainable as mounts, guard beasts or trackers. Characters visiting a world may purchase native riding beasts, or dine on exotic meat. Explorers who recognized the potential of useful animals can become rich!

ANIMAL REACTIONS

Few animals will mindlessly attack adventurers without some form of provocation, such as a threat to their young, a perceived attempt to steal their kills or food, or an interruption of their mating rituals. Some creatures may be territorial, regarding an intruder near their lair as a threat, but in this case they will usually have some form of warning signal: a growl or screech, or some body posture that indicates "go away or I'll attack." The danger here is that alien animals may have a different body language then the characters are used to!

BIOCHEMISTRY AND ADVENTURING, OR "IT BIT ME AND DIED"

GMs should bear in mind that many animals can have a very different biochemistry from Terrestrial life forms. This is dealt with in the Exotic and Gas Giant ecosystems to some extent, but even on more Earth-like worlds, it may be a factor. From an adventurer's point of view, this means three things.

First, some or all of the animals and plants may be totally inedible, or even poisonous. In fact, if some life forms are incompatible, it is quite likely that *all* will be — possibly because the amino acids forming the basis of that world's life happened to evolve as right-handed structures instead of the left-handed amino acids that form Earth animals and plants. Life based on dextra-rotational amino acids may seem edible, and may not be poisonous, but it would be totally unnourishing to a human being.

Second, if a character can't eat the native life, it means the native life can't digest him — at least, not safely. This may be scant comfort once the character has been chewed up, but it's (vaguely) possible that a creature could get sick or even drop dead after a single bite of adventurer, which can make for an odd scene if the players were expecting a tough fight!

Also, if a planet's inhabitants can't eat people, they probably can't eat other Terran food either. So when the PCs try taming the cute furry alien they rescued from the Giant Fargbender of Sigma IV, they'll have trouble buying pet food.

It is quite possible that if earthlings are poisonous or inedible, they will simply *smell* wrong, at least to some creatures. If this were the case a human might be attacked if he disturbed a bad-tempered critter, but won't be hunted down and eaten out of hunger! Reactions will vary from race to race, adding an extra complication to mixed-species wilderness expeditions. For example, the terrible Shadowviper (nastiest predator on the Lithkind's homeworld) may love the taste of Lithkind, but it gets sick at the merest smell of a human — it can't stand them, and will flee instantly. On the other hand, a whiff of Evantha throws it into a feeding frenzy, because Evantha sweat happens to be chemically similar to that of its natural prey. GMs shouldn't pull this sort of thing too often, but it can help remind players that they aren't on Earth anymore!

Third, natural weapons like poisons, parasitic spores, or hypnotic chemical lures may have very different effects on each species. The effects listed in this book generally apply to *humans*. When another race is affected, look up the description of its physiology. If it's biochemistry is described as fairly close to humanity, it will probably be affected in a roughly similar way, though their may be some differences, especially if the attack was a subtle one (e.g., mind control spores may cause insanity instead). As creatures get less human, effects will diverge. Most poisons that would kill a human would have little effect on a M'sia or Inyx, and vice versa.

A word of warning: GMs should probably make *most* animals from Earth-like worlds compatible with characters, simply because this can easily generate more adventure situations.

CREATURE DESCRIPTIONS

Statistics for each creature are provided in chart form following each creature's description. *Adventure Use* offers suggestions and ideas on how a GM can use the creature in his or her campaign, and in some cases, a short scenario outline.

PRAIRIE ECOSYSTEM

Prairies are warm, temperate or cool plains with average or low humidity. They are usually covered with the equivalent of Terran grass or other vegetation that can survive long periods of drought, and often scattered bushes or trees. Since prairies offer little cover, plant-eaters dwelling in prairies usually need good long range senses (usually sight) to spot danger a long way off, and high mobility, to run away from it.

Many prairie creatures can adapt to deserts, and vice versa. GMs should feel free to trade creatures between these two ecosystems when necessary.

Feathermane

At first glance this herbivore looks somewhat like a horse, though its eyes are slit-pupiled, its "mane" is feathery, and few horses have claws instead of hooves, or deep blue coats for that matter. It also has two short, blunt horns, on either side of its head. These are not used in combat, and seem to be secondary sexual characteristics tipped with scent glands, rather than weapons.

Feathermanes normally graze peacefully on a variety of plants native to their homeworld, but they are fierce if provoked, and their clawed forelimbs can deliver a deadly slashing kick. They live in small herds led by a dominant male and harem of five to twelve females, plus the young. Dominant males are jealous and drive away all other adult males from their chosen mates; fierce battles sometimes occur in rutting season. Against predators, the males tend to prefer to stay back and protect the young, while females are sent forth to do battle.

The flesh of both male and female tastes terrible (like boiled sewage, said one hunter!).

Adventure Use: On some worlds, Feathermanes may replace horses. Young females can be tamed, and will make fiercely loyal mounts. The males are too cantankerous to make good working beasts.

Ghostwyrm

This sinuous leopard-sized predator has twelve pairs of long legs, and a thin segmented body ending in a forked tail. Its wedge-shaped lizard-like head sits atop a high neck and contains a large brain. The head is crowned with a spiny crest that flares up around its neck like a Komodo Dragon's. Around its forehead are spaced four small eyes; its powerful jaws conceal a forked tongue, and large fangs that secrete a deadly level 6 (var. B) nerve poison. When it attacks it moves very quietly, rearing up, raising its body off the ground, rearing back, and then striking like a snake. It is very fast in a quick sprint, but lacks endurance for a long distance run, and as a result, always tries to attack by surprise.

The Ghostwyrm's most unique feature is its natural camouflage, which it evolved to sneak up on swift and far-sighted herd beasts in a region with relatively little natural cover. The creature's body is covered with long, fine wire-like transparent hairs, and these act as organic fiber optic lenses, transmitting light through the creature, effectively making it invisible! The invisibility is not without flaws — anyone looking right through a Ghostwyrm will see a distorted (and upside down) image of what is on the other side — but unless the observer is very alert, a Ghostwyrm is almost impossible to spot at a distance, and even close up seems to be a wraith-like blur. A

1.5 M

TUMBLESHARK DEVOURING RUST BUNNY

A VARK EMERGING (HOWEVER BRIEFLY) FROM A TUNNEL

RAZORBEAK (THIS ONE WAS ABOUT 2.5 M TALL)

DOCTOR PERTWEE GOT CLOSE ENOUGH TO EXAMINE THAT FAMOUS BEAK — THE DOC SAYS HE'LL REGAIN FULL USE OF HIS LEFT HAND BY THURS.
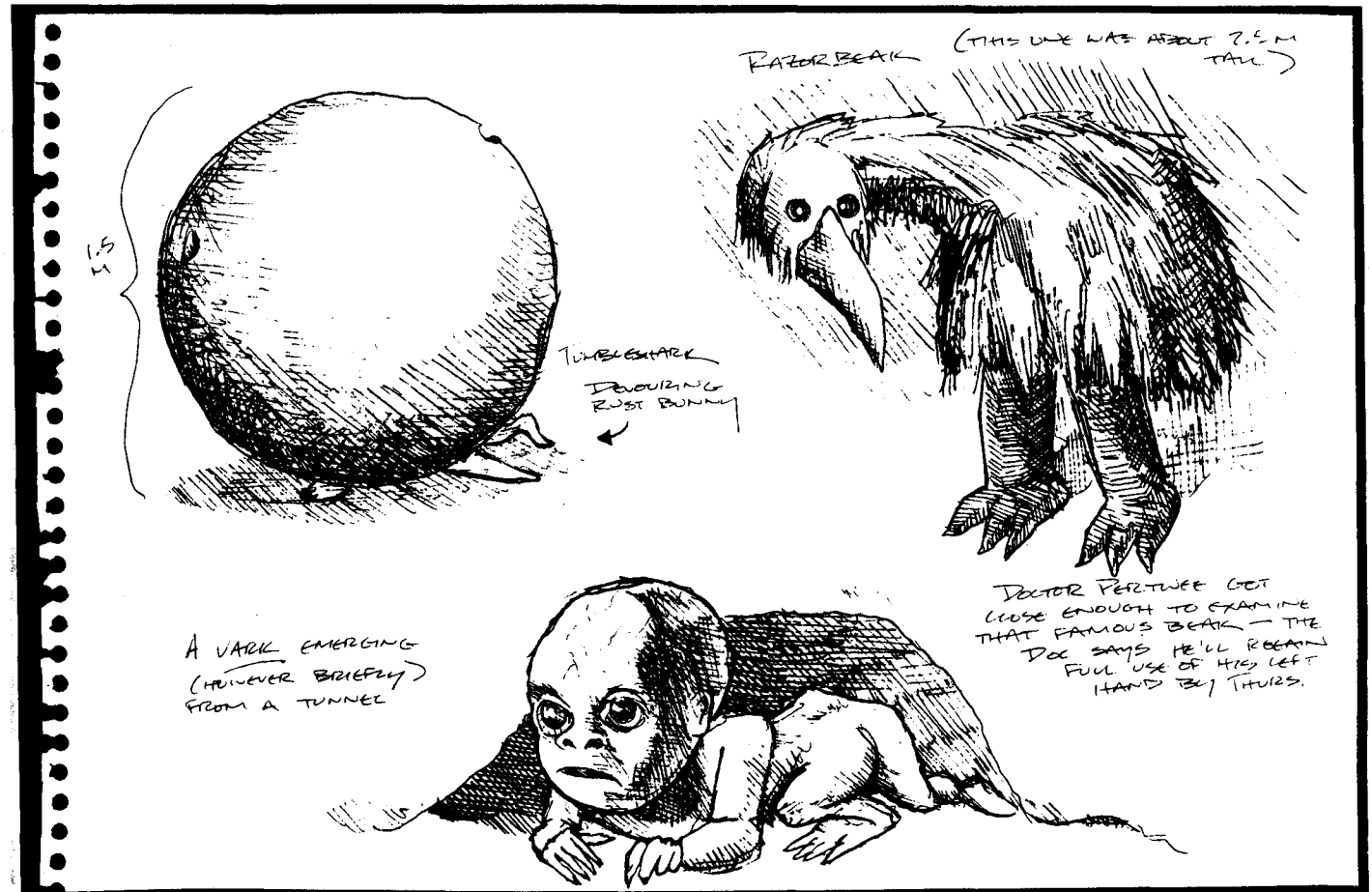
Ghostwyrm will approach from upwind to mask its scent, then dash forward for a kill once it is close enough.

Adventure Use: A Ghostwyrm is quite intelligent. One could be trained to act as a bodyguard, hunter, or even an assassin. A domesticated Ghostwyrm has a similar personality to a cat: they are friendly and playful around those they know, but possess quite independent natures, and are not always reliable. Females lay eggs, and newly hatched Ghostwyrms may be easier to train.

Moonshrike

A large flier with a huge head and great eyes, somewhat resembling a bald, featherless owl with vast bat-like wings (3 meter wingspan!) and a mouth full of wicked teeth rather than a beak. Its four spindly legs end in hooked claws.

It is a solitary nocturnal carnivore, and hunts small animals, swooping down and grabbing them in its claws, then ripping into them with its teeth.

Adventure Use: if startled or attacked, a Moonshrike could injure an adventurer, but they do not attack large prey such as humans. They are fairly intelligent, and if caught young, can be trained as hunting birds (for small game) or possibly as scouts.

Razorbeak

These predators resemble large (3 meter tall) carnivorous flightless birds, like giant ostriches, only muscular, with thick legs and necks and shaggy long-haired hides — similar to the extinct Moa bird, in fact. As their name suggests, they attack with a slash from their very sharp beak. Their foot-talons are also deadly weapons, backed up by powerful leg muscles. Their tiny wings are stunted, but flap back and forth when they are angry.

Razorbeaks hunt in packs of 2 to 10, attacking large herds of grazing herbivores, culling the old, weak and wounded. They are fast, cooperative, and deadly.

Adventure Use: If the GM decides they like human flesh, these creatures could hunt a group of lightly armed adventurers. Alternatively, Razorbeak meat may be very succulent — and while they might be hunted, they could also be raised as luxury food animals. Being a "cowboy" on a Razorbeak ranch would not be an easy or safe occupation, but it makes an interesting background for a character: "I became a intergalactic mercenary because dodging laser beams was safer than staying on my uncle's farm."

Rust Bunny

This creature resembles a cross between a reptilian rabbit and a kangaroo, about the size of a pig, with no arms, two powerful legs, big ears and eyes, and a long snout. It moves quickly by hopping. For humans, it is good eating once you scrape off the rust colored scales, and tastes somewhat like Terran chicken with a strong garlic flavor.

Rust Bunnies breed rapidly, and tend to flee if encountered, or to squeak piteously if cornered. They eat plants, especially fungi, and lay eggs.

Adventure Use: Rust bunnies reproduce very rapidly, like Terran rats and rabbits. Previously they were kept in check by a local predator, but now something or someone has eliminated it, and they are running wild, destroying crops. The PCs are hired to help stop the bunny infestation by finding out what or who eliminated their natural enemies, why it happened, and hopefully bring them back.

Tumbleshark

This is a spherical creature about 1.5 meters in diameter. It has a complex and highly efficient cardiovascular system. It has three sucker mouths, and a rough shark-like skin that can cause nasty abrasions to anyone rubbing against it.

The Tumbleshark moves by rolling, and changes speed and direction by shifting its center of gravity, via control of the flow of liquids in its three stomachs. With a good tail wind, it can reach speeds of 30 to 50 km/hour.

It is a predator, rolling over smaller animals or into larger ones, then feeding slowly on their crushed bodies. Their internal systems are under high pressure. If a Tumbleshark takes a puncture, slash or heat critical, it has a chance of bursting, instantly destroying it. This is 10% for an "A" critical, 20% for "B", 30% for "C", etc.

Adventure Use: A local pastime on several otherwise boring colonial farming planets is shooting Tumblesharks to watch them burst. When a farm boy dies, was he really killed by accident on a Tumbleshark hunt, or was there foul play involved?

Vark

Varks are small burrowing creatures of unpleasant aspect: they resemble pale white six-limbed human fetuses, with sharp clawed hands and feet. They have large, bloodshot eyes, and are completely hairless.

Communal beasts, they create vast networks of tunnels, although only one or two entrances will be visible from the surface. Sometimes an area of prairie will be so riddled with Vark burrows that it is unsafe to drive or ride across for fear of the ground collapsing underfoot.

They do not attack humans, but they do secrete a venom that is lethal to whatever local creature is their natural enemy. This venom is not poisonous to humans, but it does act as a highly pleasurable and very physically addictive drug. If bitten or injected, it is AF 90, and anyone failing a level 9 (var. C) resistance roll will experience pleasurable hallucinations for 1-10 hours.

Adventure Use: Varks may be kept or hunted for their narcotic properties. A party travelling through the jungle might stumble upon a wilderness Vark farm, perhaps manned by slaves addicted to the drugs and controlled by brutal overseers.

PRAIRIE ECOSYSTEM CREATURES										
Type	Lvl	Base Rate	Max. Pace/ MN Bonus	Speed MS/AQ	Size/ Crit	Base Hits	AT (DB)	Prime/Second/Tertiary Attacks	# Enc.	Outlook (IQ)
Feathermane	4B	20	FSpt/50	FA/FA	L/I	145C	3(20)	50LBa60/35LTs√/40MCl40	2-20	Timid(LI)
Ghostwyrm	6E	20	Dash/40	VF/VF	M/-	70D	3(100)	100MBi100/Poison«/—	1-5	Normal(LO)
Moonshrike	4C	25	Spt/60	VF/FA	L/-	85B	1(40)	50MGr/70MBi√/—	1	Aggres(NO)
Razorbeak	5D	20	FSpt/10	FA/FA	L/II	100F	3(20)	65LCl50/50LPi50/—	2-10	Aggres(NO)
Rust Bunny	1A	10	Spt/10	MF/MD	S/-	10A	3(50)	0SBa/—/—	1-10	Jumpy(NO)
Tumbleshark	7D	25	Spt/30	BF/VF	L/-	100E	8(40)	90LBa/120LTs«/—	1-5	Aggres(VL)
Vark	1A	3	Spt/0	MD/MD	S/-	10A	1(30)	10Ti/Drug«/—	2-20	Timid(NO)

FOREST ECOSYSTEM

Temperate forests are regions of average humidity and moderate or cool climate, distinguished by moderate to dense coverings of large plants such as Terran trees — although alien plants may be quite different in appearance. The topography may be flat, hilly, or mountainous. Many forest animals (except for large predators) can be found in "tamed" rural areas as well.

GMs may wish to use Forest Ecosystem creatures for the Spyder or Lithkind homeworlds.

Crimson Snakebat

This limbless 2 meter-long creature has a serpentine body covered in red fur, a bat-like head with large ears, no eyes, and a pair of leathery wings with a 5 meter wingspan. They are omnivores, eating a variety of nuts, fruits, and small game.

Crimson Snakebats have a natural homing instinct, much like carrier pigeons. Although usually living in small family groups, every winter they will fly south in large migrations of 20-100 animals. They signal one another with high pitched hooting calls.

These creatures have a limited tele-empathic sense that enables them to "feel" other beings' emotions toward them. They are affectionate towards people who they sense are friendly toward them or their masters, and rather hostile to those who aren't. This talent makes them excellent "watch dogs" — if Snakebats are tamed, they will respond to kind owners with a canine sense of loyalty, while sniffing out hidden enemies with ease. However, a side effect of their empathic abilities is that mating Crimson Snakebats have a strange tendency to *switch minds* telepathically with their partners.

Adventure Notes: Scientists may send an expedition into the wild to capture a pair of Snakebats to study their psionic abilities — this could be difficult, since the creature's empathic abilities will warn them of any danger. Furthermore, a telepath trying to contact or control one might find his own mind accidentally transferred into the Snakebat's body and vice versa. If nobody knows about the Snakebat's transfer ability (e.g., they have just been recently encountered), this last effect could also be used as a basis for an adventure: a telepath on a survey mission decides to see how intelligent the creatures are, and makes contact with a Snakebat mind, triggering its transfer ability. Now, with the animal's mind in his body, the telepath's friends all think he has gone mad. And can they do something about that weird flying snake-thing hanging around the camp?

Firling

A small mammalian life form resembling a six-limbed horned Koala bear with a striking coat of long green fleece. Stretched between its limbs are gliding membranes like those of a flying squirrel. The Firling leaps and glides from tree to tree, travelling in large groups. They are herbivores who live in the treetops and eat leaves and fruit.

Firlings are very affectionate to each other. They mate for life. Those that don't find a mate will soon die, as will any Firling who loses its mate. Firlings butt each other with their horns to knock rivals out of trees, so watch out for falling Firlings!

A MANYLEGS RESTING IN A TREE.

A SILVER SHAMBLER PERFORMING ITS MATING DANCE

A SQUIDGE ABOUT 5cm TALL

DR PERTWEE NEVER DID GET HIS WATCH BACK

My SKETCH DOESN'T DO THE REALITY JUSTICE!

Adventure Use: Adventurers (especially if climbing trees or riding grav bikes through the forest) may involuntarily cause a Firling stampede, resulting in them being knocked down by a wave of furry bodies. Firlings are also disgustingly cute creatures who young humans may have as pets (as long as they have a mated pair). A pair may sell for 500 Elmonits or more on civilized worlds.

Glimmerscale

This is an arboreal six-legged cold-blooded creature about the size of a large dog, with a lizard-like head, a long tail and a body covered in glittering black scales. It chirps like a bird when hunting prey, and makes tree-top nests out of sticks. It has claws that enable it to climb trees in search of prey. Its head ends in a powerful horny beak; it has no teeth. It is omnivorous, and as well as larger prey, it eats small insectoids, eggs, and fruit or nuts. They are somewhat territorial about their nests, especially when eggs have been laid.

Adventure Use: These have no particular use, except as local color. However, they can irritate adventurers by slicing the hands of unwary tree climbers who thought that pretty chirping sound was just a local bird! GMs may decide it can be tamed, in which case it could be used by natives or PCs as a rather odd "dog."

Manylegs

These are eight-legged herbivorous creatures about the size of Terran dogs. Their round bodies are covered with luxurious silky hair, silver grey in color. Manylegs nest in trees, eating fruit and nuts in small groups of six to a dozen, and tend to ignore nearly anything, except for a direct attack on them. They are very agile and usually flee if attacked, scattering and running up or down the sides of trees and along branches to safety.

Adventure Use: Manylegs are valuable domestic animals, since their hair can easily be spun into high grade wool. A Manylegs farm could be an interesting sight, with the creatures scampering across trees or jungle gym-like constructs. In unsettled wilderness regions, wild Manylegs may be hunted for their coats requiring lots of climbing about in trees to get them, with a danger of meeting nastier arboreal beasts.

Medusa Cloud

The Medusa Cloud appears to be a gaseous sphere 5 meters across, filled with sparkling multi-colored lights. Although it may be mistaken for an energy being, anyone approaching within 3 meters of it will see that the cloud is actually composed of small phosphorescent winged insectoids. Each creature is about 3 mm long, and somewhat resembles a tiny dragonfly, with a long tail sting. A single cloud contains upwards of 500 insectoids.

Medusa Clouds live in large communal hives. They are aggressive fighters, and like Terran Cuckoos, they steel "nests" from other insects, such as local equivalents of Terran bees, wasps or even ants. They are also highly territorial. Upon encountering an intruder near their hive, they will slowly approach, blinking their natural luminescence rapidly in warning. Failure to leave immediately will result in an attack!

The insect's most potent weapon is a sting which delivers a powerful toxin. They always attack in groups of 100 or more; if fewer than 100 survive, the Cloud will disperse. Although lethal against the insects natural enemies, against terrestrial life, its effect is paralytic. Anyone stung must make a RR versus level 10 (var. C) poison. A mild or moderate result means the character is paralyzed for 1-10 days. A severe or extreme result means the character is paralyzed for the next 3 months! Paralysis always results in a rigid muscle lock, with the character "frozen" into whatever position he was in when he was stung. The Clouds will not attack an already paralyzed individual, so there is no danger of multiple stings producing toxic shock.

Adventure Use: Medusa Clouds have infested a local farming community, having evicted honey bees or other beneficial insects. The characters are hired by the locals as exterminators. Unknown to them, the Medusa Clouds are merely the first step in a planned sequence of ecological warfare by a ruthless corporation who wish to evict the farmers, perhaps because of valuable mineral deposits on their lands.

Shadowviper

Shadowvipers are nocturnal and arboreal, nesting on tree limbs. They get their name from their ability to generate a psionic field that makes them completely invisible until they strike, as long as they remain totally motionless or move very slowly — no faster then 2 meters per round (about a meter every five seconds).

When it strikes, a Shadowviper becomes visible, revealing itself as a serpentine creature about 4 meters long and eight centimeters thick, looking something like an eyeless dark green snake with a smooth, scaleless skin. Its venom is *very* deadly, a level 15 (var. C) muscle poison, which it delivers from a single hollow fang in its mouth. It has a long tongue which forks into three separate parts; the tongue contains infrared heat sensors which it uses to locate its prey, with a range of 20 meters.

Adventure Notes: Native to the Lithkind homeworld and accidentally exported to several other planets in Lithkind space, Shadowvipers are deadly predators that will attack anything up to man-size. However, while they rank Lithkind well up on their menus, the smell of a human makes them sick. They will fight a human if provoked, and their poison is deadly against humans, but they will never attack one, and will try to avoid them if at all possible. Lithkind living in Shadowviper-infested areas may hire humans to flush out the snakes!

Silver Shambler

A bear-sized bipedal omnivore, covered in long silky silver hair, with an almost canine head having a wolf-like muzzle and great fangs. Its jaw can unhinge itself, and snap forward like an egg-eating snake, for a swift and deadly bite. A single strike could rip a man's face off. Fortunately, the Shambler does not eat humans, preferring smaller prey, but it may attack if it feels threatened or if it's disturbed during its complicated and beautiful mating dances. Normally it eats fruit and creatures similar to birds or bats. The Silver Shambler has three sexes, and during its mating period the coat of one of them becomes extremely shiny. These are very valuable to hunters, perhaps worth 2000 or more Elmonits each, intact.

Adventure Use: The PCs are hired to escort a nature photographer into the depths of the forest so she can take holographs of Silver Shambler mating dances. Unfortunately, that's when they are most aggressive, and regulations require that the PCs not take heavy weapons with them: On this world Shamblers are a protected species. But unknown to the characters, a worse threat than angry Shamblers is posed by the well armed band of poachers who have entered the forest in search of the beasts' fur!

Spotted Logleaper

A small poisonous creature the size of a rat, with a leathery triangular body covered with bright green spots, three eyes on long stalks, and three powerfully muscled legs. It has a slit mouth with two wicked poisoned fangs. It lives under rocks or rotting logs, with its eye stalks (which resemble weeds) peering out in search of unwary prey. When a victim comes into range, it leaps out to deliver a

poisoned bite, then bounces off to wait for its dinner to die. The Logleaper's venom acts as a level 6 (var. B) muscle poison. The creature can jump up to 4 meters, so watch out!

Adventure Use: These creatures are good for ambushing adventures who have paused for a rest in the woods.

Squidge

A mouse-sized four-legged creature with large frilly ears, a green body, and multicolored glider-like membranes (similar to a flying squirrel). It eats plants, especially grains, and can jump from tree to tree, spreading its wings to fly. A Squidge is very playful and easily tamed, and quite intelligent, perhaps as much as a Terran dog. They are totally harmless.

Adventure Use: Squidge make good pets for cute children the party may encounter. They are inquisitive as well as intelligent, and may swoop down to steal small bright objects, such as the keys to your ground car, blinking hand communicators, and jewels. A scout or professional thief might want to tame one as a companion.

Spinesnail

This small scavenger resembles a cross between a porcupine and a snail. It is legless, and slithers along on its belly. It has a pair of eyes on stalks that can extend out, and is covered with short spines, and is about the size of a rat. It will curl up in the face of danger. Its belly is covered with suction cups, and it can crawl up walls. It is harmless, but due to its spines, anyone attacking it unarmed who has an AT of 6 or less takes concussion hits equal to the damage they inflicted, to a maximum of 10 hits, along with a class "A" critical. Furthermore, the spines are poisonous, injecting 10th level (var. D) muscle poison if any hits are taken.

Adventure Use: Properly prepared, Spinesnails have excellent flavor. A side effect of spine snail meat is that the residue of the spine snail's poison excites a human, producing an effect similar to alcohol but longer lasting, giving the eater a pleasant "buzz" and lowering inhibitions. Spine snail meat is a delicacy. However, preparation is hazardous: if the chef gets a critical failure on a cooking roll, the meat will still be poisoned, and (after a minute) anyone eating it will suffer the effects of muscle poison!

Type	Lvl	Base Rate	Max. Pace/ MN Bonus	Speed MS/AQ	Size/ Crit	Base Hits	AT (DB)	Prime/Second/Tertiary Attacks	# Enc.	Outlook (IQ)
Crimson Snakebat	2D	20	FSpt/25	VF/FA	M/-	50D	3(40)	40MBi/—/—	1-5	Normal(MD)
Firling	1A	10	Run/20	MD/MD	S/-	10A	3(30)	20SBa80/0SHo20/—	3-30	Timid(LO)
Glimmerscale	2B	10	Spt/20	MF/MF	M/-	40C	4(20)	20SPi/—/—	1-5	Normal(LO)
Manylegs	3C	15	FSpt/10	FA/MD	M/-	100C	3(30)	0SBi/—/—	2-12	Passive(NO)
Medusa Cloud	1A	20	Spt/10	SL/MF	T/-	1A	1(30)	50SSt(100)/Paralysis«/—	500+	Protect(NO)
Shadowviper	1A	5	Dash/40	MF/VF	M/-	30C	1(20)	80SBi/Poison«/—	1-5	Bellig(NO)
Silver Shambler	6D	20	Spt/20	MF/VF	L/I	180D	4(10)	75LBi70/50LGr30/—	1-3	Normal(LO)
Spotted Logleaper	2B	10	Dash/50	FA/FA	S/-	10A	3(50)	30SBi/Poison«/—	1	Aggres(NO)
Squidge	1A	15	Spt/30	FA/FA	T/-	4C	1(50)	0Ti/—/—	1-10	Playful(IN)
Spinesnail	1A	2	Run/0	SL/SL	S/-	10A	11(20)	0Ti/—/—	1-20	Passive(NO)

FOREST ECOSYSTEM CREATURES

22.0

JUNGLE ECOSYSTEM

Jungles are usually equatorial rain forests on Earth-like worlds, where warm tropical winds bring constant heavy rainfall. On some hot planets jungles may be located above the equator. Hot and humid with thick, teeming vegetation (but with relatively little growth on the ground, since the sun cannot usually penetrate the forest canopy). Jungles are found in flat, hilly, or mountainous terrain. When populating jungles, remember that the ecology is three dimensional: large creatures will be more likely to live in or above the trees, than on the forest floor, due to the scarcity of undergrowth. Insect equivalents will be common, along with creatures which have evolved to eat them.

GMs may wish to use some Jungle Ecosystem creatures to represent the fauna of the Devi homeworld, simply converting the creatures into ambulatory fungoid equivalents.

Devilpede

This is a huge, centipede-like solitary carnivore, 6 meters long and almost a meter wide. Its body is covered with short tufts of yellow and orange spikey hair over a thick carapace. It has thirty segmented legs. Its head features two bulbous eyes, curving horns, and powerful mandibles.

It is cold-blooded, and sluggish or dormant in low temperatures or at night, but in daylight it is very fast and aggressive. Its preferred prey is man-sized.

The Devilpede is highly resistant to the effects of injury, and suffers only half normal damage penalties or stun results from criticals. While its body can manufacture excessive amounts of pain blocking hormones, it has multiply redundant internal organs, and can regenerate lost legs, eyes, or organs in a matter of weeks.

Adventure Use: The Devilpede's pain blocking hormones might be useful in manufacturing anti-shock tabs, or even illegal recreational drugs. It should be noted that their pain blocking chemical is only produced when Devilpedes are enraged (generally in combat). This makes harvesting Devilpedes something of a challenge. The useful nature of wild Devilpedes may involve adventurers in a corporate sponsored expedition to capture one intact for study. Alternatively, if they are useful to the criminal drug trade, PCs may be hired to stamp out the local poachers who are hunting them and selling the carcasses to planetary or interstellar drug lords. If things go wrong, the party could find themselves caught between heavily armed drug smugglers and the bad tempered — and almost indestructible — Devilpedes.
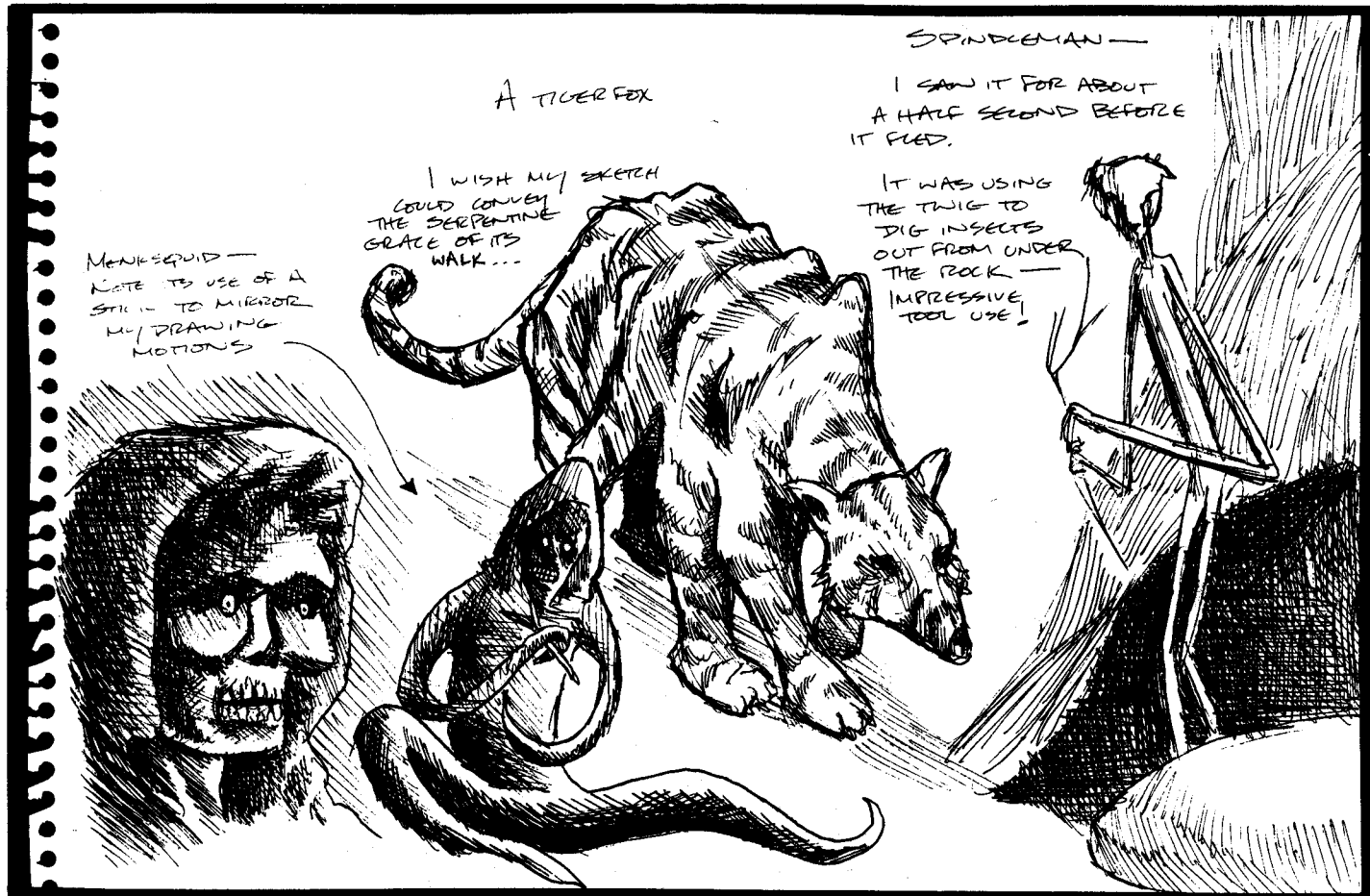
Monksquid

This man-sized creature resembles a cowled humanoid, about a foot tall; closer inspection shows that the "cowl" is a hood-like flap of skin partially covering its skull-like face. It has two glittering compound eyes, and a large, lipless mouth with many yellow-brown teeth. It is covered in soft black fur.

Its arms are furry tentacles which it uses to swing from tree to tree. It has no hands — just curling tentacle tips. Its "legs" are also tentacled, but shorter, resembling two prehensile tails more than anything else.

Monksquid are herbivores, eating fruits and nuts, and being preyed upon by predators. They are semi-intelligent (about as smart as monkeys), but are completely mute, communicating among themselves by an intricate sequence of tentacle gestures and chemical hormones. They form family groups with six to twelve members.

They are inquisitive beasts, and may follow adventurers, moving like black shadows from tree to tree, ducking out of sight if approached too closely. They are natural mimics, and if the adventurers do not seem to threaten them, they will begin miming their gestures. For instance, if the adventurers were walking with rifles ready or sighted, the Monksquid might pick up sticks and imitate their poses. This can prove unnerving to characters, but the Monksquid are not dangerous, and will vanish into the forest if attacked.

Adventure Use: Next time a party attempts to move silently on foot through an alien forest (to evade pursuers or sneak up on someone) have a family of Monksquid spot them and begin to shadow them! If the party are marching in a column, the Monksquid will pause to duplicate their march order, moving in formation along a tree branch before leaping to the next tree and repeating the performance. If the party points weapons at the creatures the Monksquid will pick up sticks and point back. If they shake their fists at them, the Monksquid will wave at them. But since shooting them might draw attention the PCs wish to avoid, the best way to loose them is to toss them some food and flee while they are eating it. As an alternative, the party might encounter a travelling entertainer or circus performer who has trained a troupe of Monksquid for use as mimes. The Monksquid may even be a focus of a scenario: maybe their owner was murdered in secret, but the Monksquid witnessed the killer, and if the characters realize this the creatures can be made to imitate the murderers peculiar walk or gestures.

Saildrake

This monkey-sized creature lives in the upper reaches of rain forests. It resembles a green lizard with a large, fan-like crest, and glides from tree to tree by means of two skin flaps along the sides of its body, attached to its front and rear limbs. Using them, the Saildrake can glide up to 20 meters in an Earth-like gravity and atmosphere. Its four legs end in disk-like suckers that enable it to grip onto the sides of trees (or buildings).

Saildrake eggs are membranous, semi-transparent sacs (you can see the embryo inside) that are hung from high tree branches. They are defended viciously by the mothers, who often can be seen circling watchfully above them.

Adventure Use: Saildrake eggs may contain a natural growth hormone that is a vital ingredient for the creation of certain exotic medical tabs. Of course, getting the eggs from the Saildrakes may be difficult.

Spiderwolf

Usually found in packs of a half-dozen or so, this man-sized hunting carnivore has five insectoid legs arranged in a radial pattern around its body, which is covered with a thick armored carapace, smooth and seemingly made of dark green glass. It has no apparent head; its circular, fang-ringed maw is located beneath the body. Each leg ends in a single sharp tooth-like talon. Its claws make the Spiderwolf an excellent tree climber, enabling it to prey on other arboreal creatures or leap onto its prey from above.

Spiderwolves hunt by sensing ground vibrations through sensory organs located on each leg. They are quite cooperative, howling hunting signals back and forth to each other in a shriek that ranges into the ultrasonic frequencies, and which can shatter glass. Fortunately, their normal prey lacks good hearing.

The usual prey of Spiderwolves are creatures several times their size; many Spiderwolves may attack at once, holding on with claws while tearing with their circular maws.

Adventure Use: Spiderwolves can menace groups of adventurers; they are also fairly intelligent, and might be tamed like dogs.

Silvereye

This is a tiny insect the size of a small moth, found in buzzing clouds on the jungle floor and in tropical marshes. It has four butterfly-like sets of deep blue and black wings, each decorated with beautiful silver eye-like patterns; its body is a shimmering black. Silvereyes possess a sting with a poison which acts as a delayed action hallucinogen in humans. Though a single sting has little effect, the bites of several can cause temporary madness; usually euphoric "drunken" behavior accompanied by a feverish sensation.

In an area infested with Silvereyes, there is a 20% chance each minute that a character not wearing totally sealed armor will suffer enough bites to cause insanity on a failed resistance roll. Since the bites are small and painless and the effect takes several minutes to appear, PCs may not immediately connect the odd behavior of their fellows with the buzzing clouds of brightly colored insects they recently passed through.

Adventure Use: Characters visiting a newly settled world may hear stories of "bush fever" or "jungle madness" from other explorers. A native cult may believe the areas where Silvereyes live to be sacred, and send individuals on pilgrimages in order to deliberately gain hallucinatory "visions" from their poison.

Spindleman

Spindlemen are impossibly thin humanoids with long stick-like limbs, ropy arms ending in twiggy fingers, an emaciated tubular torso, and heads like starved hairless Alsatians. They are 0.5 meters tall, but due to their leanness, they weigh only 7-9 kg.

They are about as intelligent as monkeys, but lair in underground burrows under tree roots rather than on branches. They live in extended families of 5 to 8 adults and several children, and are very cooperative. They are nocturnal, and quite stealthy. They do not have a real language, but call to each other in low, whispery voices at night.

Spindlemen are easily frightened, and will flee at the first sign that any larger creature has noticed them. They are scavengers, eating carrion, roots and grubs, or drinking blood of small animals through their sharp, hollow fangs.

A few families have learned to use some crude tools: wooden clubs, poison thorns, bone scrapers, strangling vines. These families are more aggressive, and a large band may even attempt to ambush and butcher sleeping humans for flesh and blood.

Adventure Use: In several million years their descendants might approach sentience. Characters may be part of a zoological expedition sent to study them, or unwary travellers may be ambushed in the night by a group of more advanced families.

Tigerfox

This critter resembles a small (100 kg, 2 meters long) eight-legged tiger, save for its head, which is triangular and large eared, closer to a Terran fox then to a feline's. The Tigerfox's body is covered by an attractive yellow and brown striped pelt that provides excellent jungle camouflage. Its front two sets of legs have retractable claws for pinning prey; it holds its victim, then rips with its fangs. It is a poor climber, but quite fast on the ground.

Tigerfoxes typically hunt in mated pairs. They are unusual in that they are marginally telepathic: mates, along with mothers and their children are mind-linked, and can send rudimentary telepathic pictures and empathic impressions to each other. A Tigerfox can always sense the location of its mate or young, and if one is killed or injured, the others will experience a muted version of that one's pain. They use their abilities to select mates and to cooperate in hunting and avoiding danger, and females utilize their powers to keep a psychic eye on their children while hunting.

Tigerfoxes are very intelligent, possibly proto-sentient. They use sophisticated hunting tactics, and can easily evade all but the most cunning traps.

Adventure Use: Tigerfoxes may be irritating local hunters or farmers, raiding traps and snitching herd animals. In retaliation, the colonists have decided to exterminate them. PCs may be hired by an environmental group to use non-violent dirty tricks to save the Tigerfoxes by convincing the locals of the error of their ways. While difficult to tame, it is possible that a telepathic individual might be able to bond with a young unmated Tigerfox, forming an empathic bond similar to that between a Tigerfox and its mate or children.

| | | Base | Max. Pace/ | Speed | Size/ | Base | AT | Prime/Second/Tertiary | # | Outlook |
Type	Lvl	Rate	MN Bonus	MS/AQ	Crit	Hits	(DB)	Attacks	Enc.	(IQ)
Devilpede	9D	30	FSpt/30	FA/VF	L/@	200E	12(20)	120HBi/—/—	1-2	Bellig(VL)
Monksquid	2B	20	Spt/30	MF/MF	M/-	25B	1(40)	0SBi40/10SGr60/30SBi√	2-10	Inquis(LI)
Saildrake	2A	20	Spt/50	FA/MF	S/-	40A	3(50)	10SBi/—/—	1-10	Timid(NO)
Spiderwolf	5C	20	FSpt/40	FA/FA	M/-	120C	12(30)	50MCl50/50MGr50/95LBi«	2-10	Aggres(LI)
Silvereye	1A	5	Run/0	MF/MD	T/-	1A	1(50)	Special/—/—	3-30	Normal(NO)
Spindleman	1C	20	Spt/40	MD/MD	S/-	20C	1(30)	0SBi50/20Wp50/—	2-20	Timid(IN)
Tigerfox	7D	25	Dash/30	VF/VF	M/I	140D	3(50)	80MCl60/90MBa40/120MBi«	1-5	Normal(IN)

JUNGLE ECOSYSTEM CREATURES

MARSH ECOSYSTEM

Marsh includes low-lying swamp and wetlands areas. They are usually humid, but the climate may be hot, average, or cold. Marshes often have a high density of wildlife, though much of the population will be concealed by tall grasses or be under water. Many marsh creatures are amphibious.

GMs may wish to use the creatures from the Marsh Ecosystem for the M'sia homeworld — most of the populated areas of Life Bearer are swampy lowlands.

Arkensark

This is a huge 10 meter long six-legged swamp beast. Its body is bulky, resembling an elephant or hippopotamus, but ending in a long, thick tail with a bony ball studded with five heavy horn-like spikes. It has a brownish leathery hide. Its six legs are thick, with broad knobby toes. Its head is huge and triangular, with no ears and two small eyes spaced well apart. Its most prominent feature is its snout, which resembles an elephant's trunk. It has no mouth: its trunk is used like a vacuum cleaner to suck up bottom-dwelling plants and animals, especially insect and amphibian larvae.

Arkensarks graze in small family groups of 3 to 6 members. For all its strength, the Arkensark is a gentle beast, too stupid to domesticate. If attacked it turns away from its foe, swinging its tail.

Adventure Use: Hunting Arkensarks may be as popular as hunting elephants or rhinos once was, with the spiked tail ball an impressive wall trophy. Bagging an Arkensark requires a pretty high-powered weapon, though, and characters had better shoot straight. While normally gentle, an injured Arkensark can respond with berserk fury, and old, wounded animals can become man-killers!

Grackle Beast

A dog-sized lizard covered in iridescent obsidian scales, this omnivore has a dragon-like head with protruding snaggle teeth. It eats fish, eggs, roots and vegetables. They are cunning, and often work in pairs or small groups to steal food from humans or snatch other predator's kills. Like squirrels, they communally store nuts and similar food for winter.

Grackle beasts are not amphibious, but they are good swimmers, and make their lairs in lakes or marshes. They are highly cooperative, and are natural engineers. Similar to Terran beavers, they construct air-filled underwater dwellings using logs, mud, and reeds. Their teeth are very sharp and their jaws strong, enabling them to saw through wood and even cut down small trees.

Adventure Use: Grackle Beasts are as smart as dogs, friendly, and easily tamed — a colonial engineer found they will do anything for peanut butter chocolate. As a result, some colonial lumberjacks and construction companies have considered using them as workers.

Rainbird

These resemble feathered Terran birds, but with teeth instead of beaks, and external pointed ears. Male Rainbirds have rainbow feathers while the female has monochromatic plumage that changes color through the spectrum depending on the season. They eat berries, grains and worms. They come in flocks and sing prettily in chorus. They have excellent hearing, and are very difficult to surprise.

MARSH WADER

THIS ONE WAS ONLY 2 M LONG — OBVIOUSLY A CHILD OF THE SPECIES

10 M

SHELL!
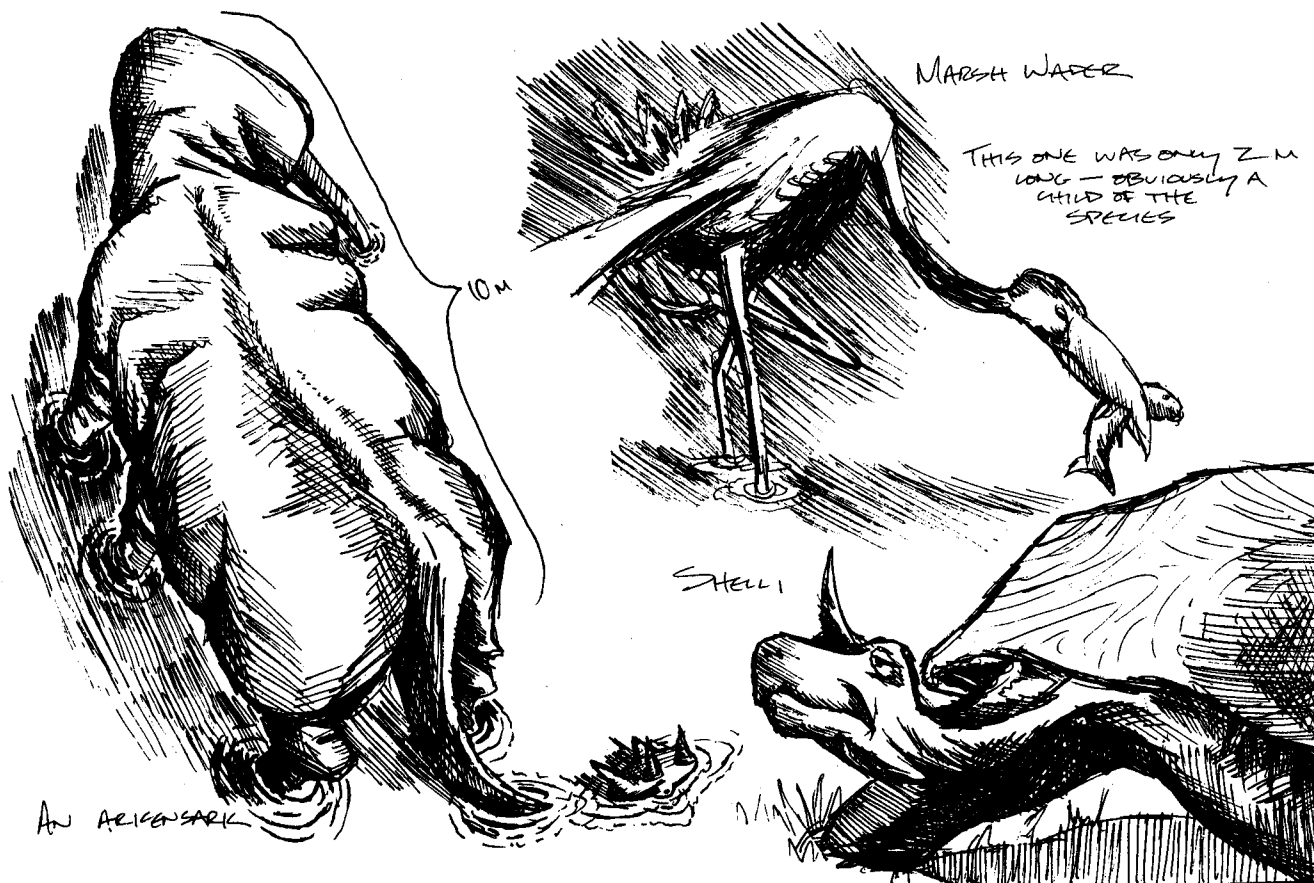
AN ARKENSARK

MARSH ECOSYSTEM CREATURES

Type	Lvl	Base Rate	Max. Pace/ MN Bonus	Speed MS/AQ	Size/ Crit	Base Hits	AT (DB)	Prime/Second/Tertiary Attacks	# Enc.	Outlook (IQ)
Arkensark	8D	10	Spt/10	SL/MD	H/LA	700H	12(0)	60LGr40/140HBa40/120Ts20	1-10	Passive(NO)
Gracklebeast	2B	20	FSpt/25	MF/MF	S/-	20B	4(30)	10MBi/—/—	2-10	Greedy(IN)
Rainbird	1A	25	FSpt/50	VF/MF	T/-	5A	1(40)	0Ti/—/—	2-20	Timid(VL)
Shelli	2A	10	Run/10	MD/MD	M/-	40B	12(10)	20MBa50/20MHo50/—	1-10	Timid(NO)
Marsh Wader	4C	30	Spt/40	MF/MF	L/I	130D	3(20)	50MCl60/60LPi40/—	2-10	Protect(VL)
Swamp Serpent	10E	30	FSpt/50	FA/FA	H/LA	250F	4(10)	80LGr(3x)/120HBiν/—	3	Aggres(VL)

Adventure Use: Rainbirds are a rare, endangered species ever since local farmers wiped them off their planet of origin to protect crops from their depredations. But a few exist on other worlds. This has come to the attention of Imperious Culthos, the Emperor's son: he knows his mother the Empress has appreciated recordings of their songs, and with her birthday coming up, he wants to give her a flock as a present. He will pay 500,000 Elmonits for a male and female bird, which he can then clone into a new flock. Unfortunately, the only planet where records indicate a Rainbird population survives is deep within a distant Frontier Zone — and when the party arrives, they find it has recently been invaded by an force of Tezcat or Valkyrie warriors! Is even 500,000 worth this? Of course, failing the Emperor's hot-headed younger son is not recommended.

Shelli

Resembling a very long necked and long legged giant tortoise the size of a large goat, Shelli are actually mammalian rather than reptilian. They graze on grass and roots, curling into their shells to escape predators. Adult males have a single large horn, and can be quite aggressive.

Shelli can be milked (a simple matter of turning them over, thus immobilizing them) and are also good eating. They make an interesting alternative to more conventional Terran creatures as domestic animals for farmers, while Shelli steaks can turn up in restaurants the PCs are visiting. Their shells may also be valuable for artists, and may even be used by local primitives for shields or boats!

Adventure Use: If lost or shipwrecked on an unexplored world, clever PCs may encounter Shelli, and discover that not only are they tasty, they can also be milked. Adventurers could also meet local primitives herding Shelli, rather than cattle. Characters could be attacked by aggressive males during mating season.

Marsh Wader

This is a three-legged bird-like creature about 4.5 meters tall, covered with fuzzy black and white fur, rather than feathers. It moves quickly on three thin, stilt-like legs that end in curving talons. Its beak is curved and razor sharp. It has short wings that balance it when it runs, but is completely flightless. It is usually found wading through marshes looking for food in family groups of a half dozen adults and young. Different groups regularly call to each other with long, eerie cries that can be heard for kilometers around.

The Marsh Wader exists on a mixed diet of fish, marsh plants and insects. However, adults are very aggressive, and will charge intruders to drive them away from their young and their feeding grounds. Their goal is to scare other animals (and people) off: a person who flees will not be attacked, just chased away.

Adventure Use: Marsh Waders are dangerous only if the characters choose to stand and fight. Cooked, they may make good eating, and it is possible that colonists in a marshy region would raise or hunt them for food, or even for riding.

Swamp Serpent

A scaly amphibian somewhat resembling a 12 meter semi- trans-parent snake, living in the bottom ooze of marshes and shallow rivers. It is headless with a long neck that ends in a muscular mouth-like opening; six tentacles surround the maw to aid in catching food. It uses strong throat muscles to pulp its food, rather than teeth. It has no eyes, instead its body senses vibrations and changes in ground or water pressure and temperature (accurate within 5 meters on land and 40 meters underwater). As it moves, it makes a horrible sucking sound, and because its skin is mostly transparent, its internal organs are visible along with anything it has recently eaten but not fully digested. They are not solitary creatures, but rather hunt in mated trios.

Swamp Serpents fight better in the water, so add +10 to their OBs and DBs when engaging prey in water.

Adventure Use: Swamp Serpents are dangerous enough to threaten an armed group of adventurers. They may attack a party's boat by surfacing underneath it, and adventurers fleeing one onto land may be surprised to see it slither after them!

DESERT ECOSYSTEM

Deserts are dry, barren regions where the climate is too harsh to support much vegetation; they may be cold, hot, or of average temperature. The topography is often flat, composed of sand, loose or cracked earth, salt flats, or gravel, but rocky mesas, hills or shifting sand dunes are also likely. Water sources will be mostly underground, except for the occasional oasis.

GMs may wish to use Desert Ecosystem creatures for the Drakaran homeworld, much of which is desert or arid plains.

Duster

This solitary rat-sized entity has a body which looks like a leathery yellow-brown upside-down bottle mounted on a golf ball. It is a flyer, using four counter-rotating "propeller blades" to hover with, the blades being attached helicopter-fashion. It is a slow but steady aerialist, and highly maneuverable.

Its "head" is the "golf ball" mounted below the bottle-like body. It has a small slit mouth, and four short (20 cm) gripping tentacles, each of which is covered with a slimy goo that it uses to ensnare insects and small vole-sized animals.

The Duster will not attack human-sized creatures, but it may become frightened and release its natural defense: a foul smelling spray of gas vented from skunk-like glands just below the mouth. The composition of this musk is similar to Mace, and is strong enough to incapacitate a human: anyone without a face mask must make a RR versus level 5 (var. A) poison. A mild result indicates the character is partially blinded, and at -25 for 2 rounds. A moderate result indicates

blindness (-50) for 4 rounds, followed by partial blindness. A serious result indicates the character is incapacitated for 10 rnds, or 20 rnds on a extreme result. It can use this attack once every 10 hrs.

Adventure Use: Dusters are simply an exotic desert encounter, although GMs may wish to have their musk possess valuable chemical properties when properly refined, which might make them the object of a hunt by perfume or weapon manufacturers. The creatures themselves are not tamable, but enterprising individuals (or corporations) may use genetic engineering or cybernetic implants to create a more tractable breed for use as scouts or security wardens.

Firehound

A nocturnal hunting carnivore, the Firehound has a 1.5 meter long snakelike body, terminating in a reptilian head with a flaring crest. It has eight limbs ending in clawed legs, and a long tail used for balance as it runs. A Firehound's body is covered with deep crimson scales that seem to ripple as it moves. Its thick scales serve as armor, but their primary purpose is to reduce the evaporation of bodily moisture. It is blind to the visual spectrum but has excellent infrared senses, and can even follow a trail by residual heat left on the ground.

Adventure Use: Firehounds may be trained as trackers or hunting beasts. Characters on desert worlds may find themselves hunted by police or prison guards using them, or purchase one for a hunting expedition of their own. A suggested cost is 1200 Elmonits per beast.

HOPPER

A DUSTER, TAKEN BY SURPRISE BY DR PERTWEE, WHO WAS BLINDED FOR ABOUT 5 MINS

THIS MAY BE THE SILLIEST-LOOKING CREATURE I'VE ENCOUNTERED

DETAIL OF SKULCH HEAT
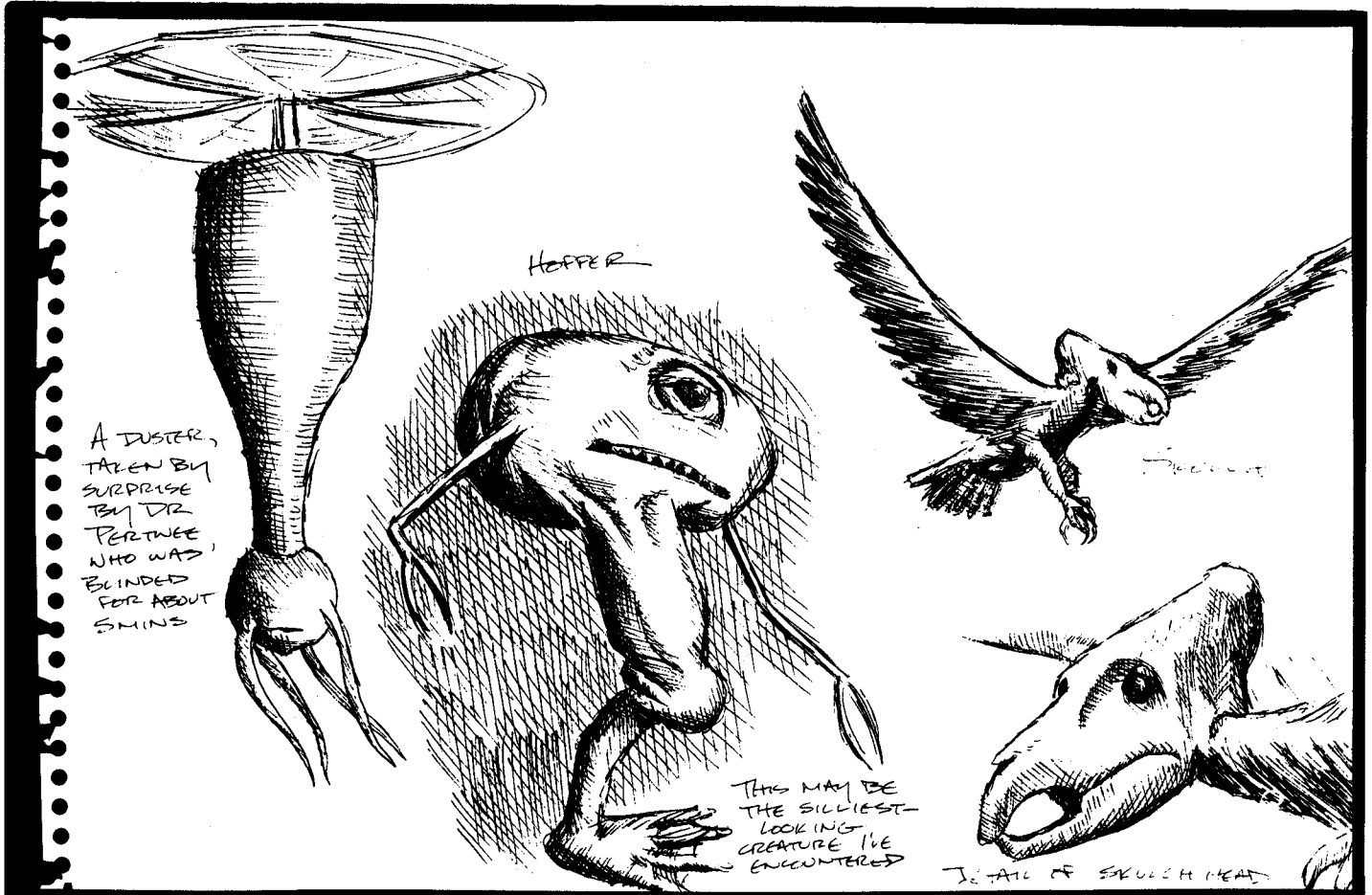
Hopper

A nocturnal creature, the Hopper has an oval body 45 cm in diameter, no head, one great eye, and a large mouth full of teeth next to its stomach. It stands 1.2 meters tall on a single leg with a powerful, bulbous knee muscle and splayed foot. It is covered in soft blue fur to protect against cold desert nights. Radiating from its body are two long stick-like arms ending in pincer claws.

Hoppers are solitary omnivores, only getting together for brief mating periods. They eat various plants, supplementing their diet with the occasional fresh meat of smaller creatures. Its round body stores a day's supply of water, much like a camel's hump. Its large eye gives good night vision. Hoppers are quite territorial, and though they don't eat humans, they will attack to drive them from their territory after hopping madly up and down as a warning.

Adventure Use: Aside from acting as "monsters" to anyone who disturbs them, Hoppers are really good for driving explorers and hunters out of their minds by leaving strange, single-footed tracks. They are big enough and mean enough to be "game" animals for hunters, or interesting subjects for nature holographers. Properly tamed, they may make attractive house pets.

Mortis

A 2 meter tall, 6 meter long being resembling a wingless preying mantis covered in reflective scales. Its large mandibles can rip through steel, and its front legs are covered with lethal spikes, but end in articulated pincers. It hums rhythmically to itself when in combat. It eats nearly anything living, but prefers prey of about human-size. Human flesh is fully compatible with its metabolism. Its natural armor can reflect laser beams (+30 DB) as well as the desert sun, and its flesh regenerates rapidly (1 hit per round). The Mortis is highly intelligent, but not social. It learns rapidly; if it sees a character pull the pin from a grenade and throw it, and later captures a grenade of its own, it will know how to use it! However, it lacks language.

Adventure Use: A growing minority of xenologists believe the Mortis to be a devolved warrior race created by the Sianetic Harbingers or another elder species. Characters may be hired to accompany scientific expeditions to study the Mortis, and may get more than they bargained for if the scientists were less then candid about the danger posed by the species.

Needleworm

A long, thin beast with a segmented worm-like body 6 meters long. It has no head — its body ends in a single, hollow bone needle. Its eyes are on six stalk-like ridges mounted along the first third of its torso. It lives coiled under rocks, blending in with its sandy coloration.

The Needleworm is normally harmless, using its needle to pierce small "mole hills" made by local insect-like life forms and suck them up, ant-eater fashion. It thus performs a valuable pest control service on many desert worlds. Needleworms are only dangerous during their brief spring mating season. The worm reproduces sexually, but each is both male and female. After two worms mate, each fertilizes the other's eggs. The worm then goes in search of a host. After finding suitable prey (anything large and warm-blooded) it jabs them with its needle, injecting a dozen or so eggs and a paralyzing hormone. After a time, the eggs hatch, eating their way out of their victim's body with predictably fatal results.

Adventure Use: When first they encounter Needleworms, characters should find them harmless but nasty looking. When they next meet them (perhaps returning to their world for an adventure some months or years later) it should be during the beast's mating period — leading to a nasty shock when a supposedly harmless beast turns deadly.

Sandybear

Sandybears appear to be a large, fat, hairless panda bears with tan skin and hooves instead of claws. They are about 2.5 meters long and weigh some 220 kg. They have excellent sense of smell, which can detect water within a mile, and large slit-pupiled eyes which can be covered with transparent nictating membranes to protect against dust and grit. Sandybears are found in small herds, ambling about the desert in search of food plants. They are surprisingly fast, but despite their bulk, are not at all dangerous, eating only plants. In fact, much of their "fat" is actually stored water, making their appearance a boon to characters lost in the waste.

Adventure Use: Sandybears are too slow to ride, but may be domesticated and either herded for food or milk, or used as pack creatures.

Skulch

A dog-sized flying predator with a head like a horse's skull, the Skulch has a lean muscular body, large fan-like wings, a fan tail, long legs ending in nasty talons, and a bad attitude. Skulch are blind to normal light, but hunt by infrared. Highly aggressive, they prefer to frighten off other animals and steal their kills (or hijack food from adventurers' camps) but are not adverse to fighting if the prey are weak or wounded. They are trisexual, with mated trios hunting together. They strike at night, and usually prefer hit and run tactics, wearing prey down over several hours with brief slashing raids, but if one member of a trio is killed or seriously hurt, the others will go into a berserk killing frenzy.

Skulch lay eggs and then neglect them: there is no attachment between parents and young. The eggs take a long time to mature, but a newly hatched Skulch is born fully formed, hungry, and lusting for its mates. After they mate, Skulch bury their eggs underground in warm soil or deep desert sands. The young are born buried alive, and claw their way to the surface, which some say accounts for their terrible temper!

Adventure Use: Skulch are best used as camp raiders at inopportune times for players in the desert. Newborn Skulch may emerge from the desert floor amidst a party's camp.

		Base	Max. Pace/	Speed	Size/	Base	AT	Prime/Second/Tertiary	#	Outlook
Type	Lvl	Rate	MN Bonus	MS/AQ	Crit	Hits	(DB)	Attacks	Enc.	(IQ)
Duster	1A	10	Spt/50	FA/MF	S/-	20A	1(50)	0SGr50/Spray50/—	1	Timid(NO)
Firehound	3C	20	FSpt/40	FA/FA	M/-	50C	11(30)	60MCl60/40MBi40/—	1-10	Aggres(VL)
Hopper	2C	20	FSpt/50	MF/MF	M/-	35B	1(20)	20Bi/—/—	1	Protect(LO)
Mortis	10E	30	Spt/40	VF/BF	L/LA	200E	12(50)	120LPi60/95HBi40/—	1-2	Hostile(MD)
Needleworm	3B	10	Run/30	MF/MF	L/-	150E	11(10)	60MHo/Eggs«/—	1-2	Timid(NO)
Sandybear	2B	10	FSpt/30	FA/MF	L/I	100D	3(20)	10LBa80/15MBi20/—	2-20	Timid(VL)
Skulch	4C	30	FSpt/50	VF/FA	M/-	60C	3(50)	70MCl/—/—	1-5	Bellig(NO)

DESERT ECOSYSTEM CREATURES

Arctic ecosystems include both frozen tundra and actual ice fields, as well as some forest ecosystems near polar latitudes, during winter. During winter, tundra regions are indistinguishable from actual ice caps, but during the short summer, surface snow and ice may melt. Because the water cannot drain away (since the soil below is frozen), the result is a swampy wasteland, with many lakes and marshes. Vegetation grows rapidly, mostly equivalents of Terran lichens or moss. Many animals migrate, to take advantage of the climatic changes.

GMs may wish to use some of the Arctic ecosystem creatures for the Tezcat homeworld, much of which is snow covered.

Banshee

This eagle-sized flyer has a small, round body with a huge head and vast feathered wings. Its body is covered in soft brown and white feathered plumage, save for its long, hairless tail. Its large head is dominated by two bulbous yellow eyes, and a single antennae projecting from the forehead. The creature has no arms or legs, but the long prehensile tail acts as a limb, and can hold prey, fruits or nuts.

Banshees are noted for their terrible howl, which ranges into the ultrasonic frequencies, and can even shatter glass. They are scavengers, swooping down and using their shrieks to scare other beasts away from carcasses. Vulture-like, they have been known to circle around injured animals (or sentients), waiting for them to die. Sometimes they get a little impatient and swoop down to finish the job.

Adventure Notes: While their mocking cries are scant comfort to an injured character, their loud presence could help search parties find someone stranded in the wilderness.

Crystalmite

Crystalmites are small eight-limbed spider-like pests who resemble 1 cm snowflakes with tiny antennae. They can see into the infrared, and are attracted by heat. They are small enough and quiet enough that they can crawl into an adventurer's boots (perhaps mistaken for snow or ice crystals if the character looks down) or into his sleeping bag.

Unless the character is wearing a sealed space suit or armored exoskeleton, Crystalmites will gradually work their way inward through his clothes toward his neck and up into his ears, and there they will lay their eggs. This process takes one round, and the victim will probably not notice it. Unless they undergo a diagnostic scan, they may not realize that eggs have been injected.

Two days after the eggs are laid the character's skin will feel very itchy (-10 on all rolls due to distraction) where he was attacked, but there will be no apparent sore to scratch — the irritation is under the skin. The sensations persist for a couple of hours, after which he will feel a burning pain. A few seconds later, 2-20 baby (2 mm diameter) crystal mites will eat their way out, doing 2 hits of damage per mite in the process! If more than 10 mites are born, the GM should also roll an "A" puncture critical to simulate internal damage. (Reinterpret inappropriate results, e.g., arm damage — substitute with temporary or permanent deafness, brain injury etc.).

SNOW KRAKEN

ABDOMINAL SAC

A SNOWSCANNER

MAKING A MEAL OF A TOM-TOM

A RUGBEAST, WHICH NEARLY SMOTHERED DOCTOR PERTWEE THIS MORNING
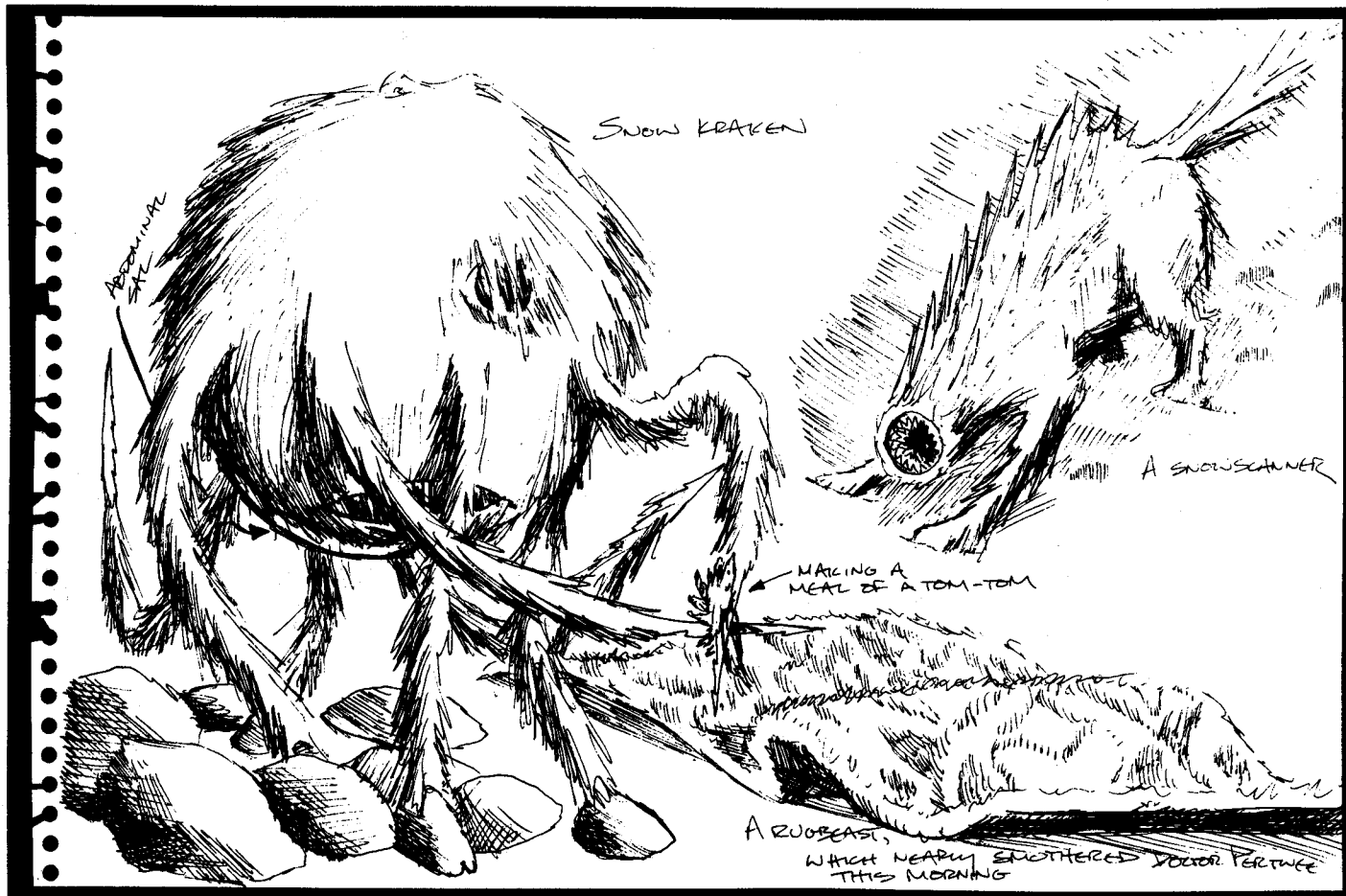
Adventure Use: Crystalmites are no trouble to adventurers who have access to medical care, but can be dangerous to characters who are lost in the wilderness, shipwrecked, or imprisoned in arctic prison camps. Evil villains might threaten to infect characters with Crystalmites if they don't cooperate.

Ice Scorpion

This 3 meter long creatures resembles a disquieting hybrid of scorpion and grasshopper, but is pale white in color, and covered with soft fur. It has enormous pincer-tipped forearms, six long grasshopper-like legs ending in sharp gripping claws, and a lethal tail sting. Despite its appearance, it is warm-blooded, though not mammalian. Ice Scorpions are aggressive predators that fill the same niche as the Terran polar bear, leaping from ice flow to ice flow in search of prey.

When they attack they use their claws to give them a good grip on ice surfaces or their victims while attempting to paralyze prey with their stingers: successful use of their poison attack injects a 7th level (var. B) nerve poison.

They can swim (clumsily), and can leap up to 3 meters. They are solitary beasts, except during a brief mating season. They will usually attack other creatures on sight.

Adventure Use: An attempt to salvage (or escape from) a vehicle that has sunk in arctic waters may be complicated by Ice Scorpions. It is possible that their fur or venom could be valuable, in which case characters may want to hunt them. They cannot be easily tamed.

Rugbeast

A dweller on a high gravity arctic planet, this beast resembles a shaggy carpet of beautifully patterned white and grey hair. It is 6 cm thick and some 5 meters long and 3 meters wide. It moves in an undulating fashion. It is a carrion eater, slowly absorbing dead meat, animal waste and rotting vegetation, and is quite harmless. However, it is attracted to warmth (it likes to sleep over volcanic vents) and might crawl over a sleeping character, especially if he or she had a thermal blanket or was wearing a heated suit. If it does this, a character should be able to wake up before he or she smothered, but may get quite a shock!

The Rugbeast has a +50 Stalking bonus.

Adventure Use: The Rugbeast makes a useful domestic animal. It may be cultivated for its fur, or more interestingly, used as mobile carpet, although this could lead to complications: "The rug beast is getting away, dear. Close the door! Didn't you feed it?" GMs may use the Rugbeast as a piece of local color that might make a valuable novelty trade item for off-world merchants.

Snow Kraken

The Snow Kraken has a 3 meter spherical body, covered in fur save for its large translucent abdominal sac that acts as its stomach. It has eight tentacles. Four end in hooves, which it walks on. The other four are tipped with blades of serrated bone. It has no head, and its most prominent feature is a single great eye, rimmed with bushy white fur. Its mouth is a hollow maw, ready to accept the bloody gobbets that are all that's left of prey when its serrated sword-tentacles have finished their work.

The creature waits for prey behind snowdrifts or in rocky out croppings, and then rushes out to ambush it. It is solitary and long lived. The females are slightly larger and far more aggressive then males (+20 OB). When Snow Krakens mate, the males rarely survive the courtship.

Adventure Use: The Snow Kraken is a deadly beast of the arctic, and can be used to menace adventurers. Because of its vicious reputation, its fur or sword blades may be sought after hunter's trophies. Colonials or local primitives may use the tentacle-swords to tip spears or make into long knives (treat as short swords).

Snowscanner

This is a four-legged pack hunter, searching for prey in groups. Its body resembles a headless wolf, lean and muscular, with four legs ending in short claws, but it is covered with very long strands of wiry silver hair which, on its back, stands straight upright. In place of a head, it has a circular mouth ringed with several layers of triangular teeth on the end of its neck. It is eyeless, hunting through the worst snow storms using a natural version of radar, with a range of 500 meters versus man-sized targets: its wiry silver fur acts as a radar antenna. Treat its detection ability as a Multiscanner tuned to life detection, with the Snowscanner getting a +20 bonus due to its natural talent. Within 10 meters range, they can use their sense of smell (glands are in the mouth) to home in without using their radar. A personal EW generator gives a -50 to their chance of detection (unless they get within 10 meters).

Adventure Use: The Snowscanner's radar sensing abilities make it a dangerous arctic hunter. Its radar pulses can be detected by a multiscanner set to detect power emanations at up to 1 km away — leading characters to wrongly suspect the presence of vehicles or robots hunting them! Snowscanners should be hard to tame (-20 to rolls), but would fetch great prices (5,000 or more Elmonits each) if domesticated.

Tom-Tom

This small (25 cm long) animal vaguely resembles a fat eight-legged lizard covered in thick tabby fur, although it is warm-blooded. The Tom-Tom's multiple legs give it a vaguely arachnid appearance, but this is belied by its reptilian head and two feathery antennae.

It lives in cold marshes and tundra, and on the shores of arctic seas. It has a long sticky tongue that darts out to catch insects, small fish, or the like. Its name comes from a habit of drumming on rocks with its forelimbs, by which it attracts some of its natural prey.

Adventure Use: Tom-Tom's are quite affectionate (they like being stroked) and have a pleasant spicy smell; as such, some humans have made pets of them on colonial worlds, where they help keep down insect pests, which often swarm through sub-arctic regions during spring and summer months. Characters hearing their rhythmic drumming may mistake the Tom-Toms for aboriginal war drums.

Voltron

These are large six-legged herbivores, constantly migrating across the tundra in search of fresh grazing land. Each creature is about 2 meters long, and weighs some 500 kg. They have elongated, flexible three-segmented bodies covered in shaggy coats of white fur, with two legs per segment and low-slung heads short muzzles, bulbous insectoid eyes, and curling boar-like tusks for digging out plants from the frozen ground.

The Voltron always move in herds of at least ten beasts. Close observation will show that the herd's are very well organized, with scouts, flankers, and so on, all moving in nearly military precision. Any threat will be met by a highly coordinated counter, which may include suicidal self-sacrifice on the part of individuals to protect the whole.

In fact, the Voltron are telepathic, and though individuals are not especially intelligent, the whole forms a psychic gestalt in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, with all individuals sharing a single mass consciousness! Because of this, any subtractions from activity due to criticals are shared among all members of the herd, even among the uninjured. However, divide the accumulated penalties by the number of members in the herd. For instance, if a herd of 50 beasts suffers a total penalty of -220, the individuals would only be at -4 each, since the "group mind" is able to dampen the pain of individuals!

Adventure Use: The Voltron make an interesting encounter for an adventuring band, especially one who intends to do some hunting or live off the land. Once their secret is known, characters may be hired by a scientific team to study the Voltron. This may not be difficult in itself, but the arctic environment may contain far more fierce creatures, marauding primitive tribesmen who do not wish their hunting grounds disturbed, or other hazards.

ARCTIC ECOSYSTEM CREATURES

Type	Lvl	Base Rate	Max. Pace/ MN Bonus	Speed MS/AQ	Size/ Crit	Base Hits	AT (DB)	Prime/Second/Tertiary Attacks	# Enc.	Outlook (IQ)
Banshee	3B	30	FSpt/50	FA/FA	M/-	30B	1(30)	40MPi/—/—	2-10	Normal(VL)
Crystalmite	1A	1	Walk/0	SL/MF	T/-	1A	1(30)	0Ti/—/—	1-10	Aggres(NO)
Ice Scorpion	7D	25	FSpt/30	MF/VF	L/I	80C	11(20)	60LPi/100LSt√/Poison«	1-2	Aggres(VL)
Rugbeast	1H	1	Walk/0	CR/CR	L/II	150H	3(40)	10MTs/—/—	1	Passive(NO)
Snow Kraken	8D	25	FSpt/20	FA/VF	L/LA	200D	4(20)	90LCl(x4)/—/—	1	Bellig(VL)
Snowscanner	3C	20	FSpt/20	FA/FA	M/-	100C	3(30)	60MBi/—/—	2-20	Hungry(LO)
Tom-Tom	1A	10	Run/30	MD/MF	S/-	10A	3(20)	0SBi/—/—	1-2	Normal(VL)
Voltron	5C	20	Spt/20	MF/MF	L/I	220D	4(10)	35LHo50/30LBa50/50MTs√	10-100	Protect(LO)

26.0

SHALLOW WATER ECOSYSTEM

The creatures in this ecosystem may be used either for inland lakes and rivers or for ocean dwellers. In the ocean, the shallows range from the beach to the edge of the continental shelf, and also the upper reaches of the open sea. On most worlds holding life, they contain an amazing variety of organisms. Many creatures also live on the floor of the continental shelf, or in coral reefs or similar constructs.

Balloonsquid

The elephant-sized Balloonsquid has a body composed of four green spheres under which are a mass of writhing tentacles. The central sphere has three eyes and three maws equipped with circular grinding surfaces that open and close like a camera iris.

The Balloonsquid cracks seawater, converting it to hydrogen and storing it in its bladders. It then rises out of the ocean, floating low, and scooping up its prey — seabirds, surface fish and boating humans — with its 10 meter long tentacles.

If the Baloonfish takes a critical hit, there is a 10% chance that an "A" Puncture or Slash or Automatic/Shrapnel critical will cause it to explode. This chance doubles per level of critical, e.g., 20% for a "B," 40% for a "C," etc. The chance of exploding is 15% (doubling each level) from Heat criticals. If it explodes, treat the effect as the detonation of a Mk. 5 enhanced plasma grenade.

Adventure Use: The Balloonsquid makes a useful surprise "monster" to afflict overconfident adventurers with. Characters in hydrofoils or low flying aircraft may be surprised when a balloon squid rises out of the water, or its tentacles drop down from a low cloud. Alternatively, a race of aquatic aliens like the Inyx may have tamed or genetically modified Baloonsquid as living hot-air balloons!

Clear Ones

These are translucent blue creatures about 1 meter in diameter, vaguely resembling a cross between a squid and a jelly fish. These beings are continually pulsing as they suck in water and expel it in a jet for propulsion. They have ten weak but highly dexterous manipulative tentacles each only as thick as human fingers, but 2 meters long. Their tentacles are not poisonous, but they can spray an inky discharge over a 10 meter radius that can foul diving masks and hide their escape, blocking normal vision and giving a -50 penalty to all characters who lack infravision.

Although it may not be apparent immediately, the Clear Ones are somewhat intelligent, though they have not developed language or tools and have no interests in these concepts. Rather they are a swarm mind, linked together by crude telepathy. They will likely be curious about other sentient life forms. They are interested mainly in philosophical matters (e.g., the nature of the universe above the "air barrier"). However, their "mass-minds" can also prove "disturbing" to psionic adepts, and telepaths may experience weird thoughts and images while in their presence.

Adventure Use: Characters in an undersea adventure may encounter these beings, and if they guess they are semi-sentient and mental contact can be made, they might provide adventurers with useful information about whatever the party is seeking, in return for providing stimulating ideas (such as the existence of a world of air beyond the water's surface).

Death Needles

The Death Needle is a small, nail-size fish. They come in large schools, swarming like piranhas. They jab their prey with their hard, sharp bony snouts, inflicting Puncture criticals, until their victim passes out from loss of blood. Then they will begin to feast.

Death Needles make one of their listed attacks each round for every group of 100 fish. Therefore, a school of 500 fish would make five such attacks every round. A large school can, of course, split its attacks between multiple targets.

Adventure Use: Death Needles serve the same function as piranha: a school is too big to kill (except with explosives) and so encourages PCs to stay out of the water. Still, Death Needles can also give PCs a good scare: whoops, the professor's beautiful daughter just fell in, who wants to dive in and rescue her?

Living Island

These gigantic sea creatures can grow as large as 2 km across, though most specimens are only 800 to 1,200 meters in diameter. Their thickness is about 1/100 of their diameter.

As their name suggests, they resemble small islands. The topsides of all but the youngest floating islands are usually covered with several layers of weeds, anemones and barnacles, and may even have occasional bird nests. Digging a few centimeters will reveal their actual surface, which has a spongy consistency and is chalk white.

Living Islands grow slowly over their thousand-year long lifespan. They usually stay in the open sea, but a few have been known to drift near to land. They may remain surfaced for years or decades, but every century or so one may suddenly dive to find a mate, a process that is as spectacular as it is rare. They are hermaphroditic — after mating, both islands become pregnant, later giving birth by "budding" off smaller chunks.

Living Islands have no natural enemies. However, if irritated (e.g., by someone drilling into them) they may dive underwater, usually creating a dangerous maelstrom that can sink boats and suck swimmers to their doom. GMs should require a Absurd maneuver roll to avoid disaster using Sailing or Swimming skill if someone is within 2 x (diameter) meters of the creature when it submerges.

The island's huge toothless mouth is on its underside, where it sucks up sea creatures, mostly small fish and plankton. A baleen-like grid prevents larger creatures from being consumed, but the sucking process forms a vortex beneath it, which can be very dangerous to divers, pinning them against the mouth grid until their air runs out. A Swimming roll should be made, with partial success indicating the character has made no progress against the current and must roll again next turn, and any failure indicating he or she has been sucked against the grid. Once this happens, GMs should require a 100+ Strength roll to escape, with one roll allowed per minute.

Adventure Use: PCs find a century-old computer file which includes a graphic of a map purportedly leading them to a small island where a shipwrecked smuggler hid a fortune in illegal pleasure tabs. But when the characters arrive, they find the island isn't there. A search of the area reveals the isle to be 40 km away — and larger than it should be. Of course, it is actually a Living Island, and the drugs have been absorbed in the island's flesh as it has grown. PCs using a multiscanner tuned for physical analysis of the drug's formulae may be able to find the tabs, but unless the characters think to make a life scan, they may not realize that the tabs are buried inside the flesh of a living creature. A creature who will not be happy to have characters start drilling into its skin.

Quillfish

The yellow-skinned Quillfish has a flat, oval-shaped body and a long flat tail covered in 30 cm poisoned quills. It basks on the surface of the water; its main enemies are not other fish, but aerial predators.

It can use its powerful back muscles to flick quills into the air if frightened or attacked, but it is not especially aggressive, and eats only water insects or plankton equivalents. It has 40 quills, and can regrow any lost quills in about 3 days. Treat its ranged attack as a mini-needler, with a 2 burst magazine and an OB of 30.

SUNRAY

HUGE CREATURE! THIS ONE WAS ABOUT 25 M WIDE, BUT LOOKED BIGGER

A CLEAR ONE VISIBLE IN OUR ARTIFICAL LIGHT

6 CM

DEATH NEEDLE
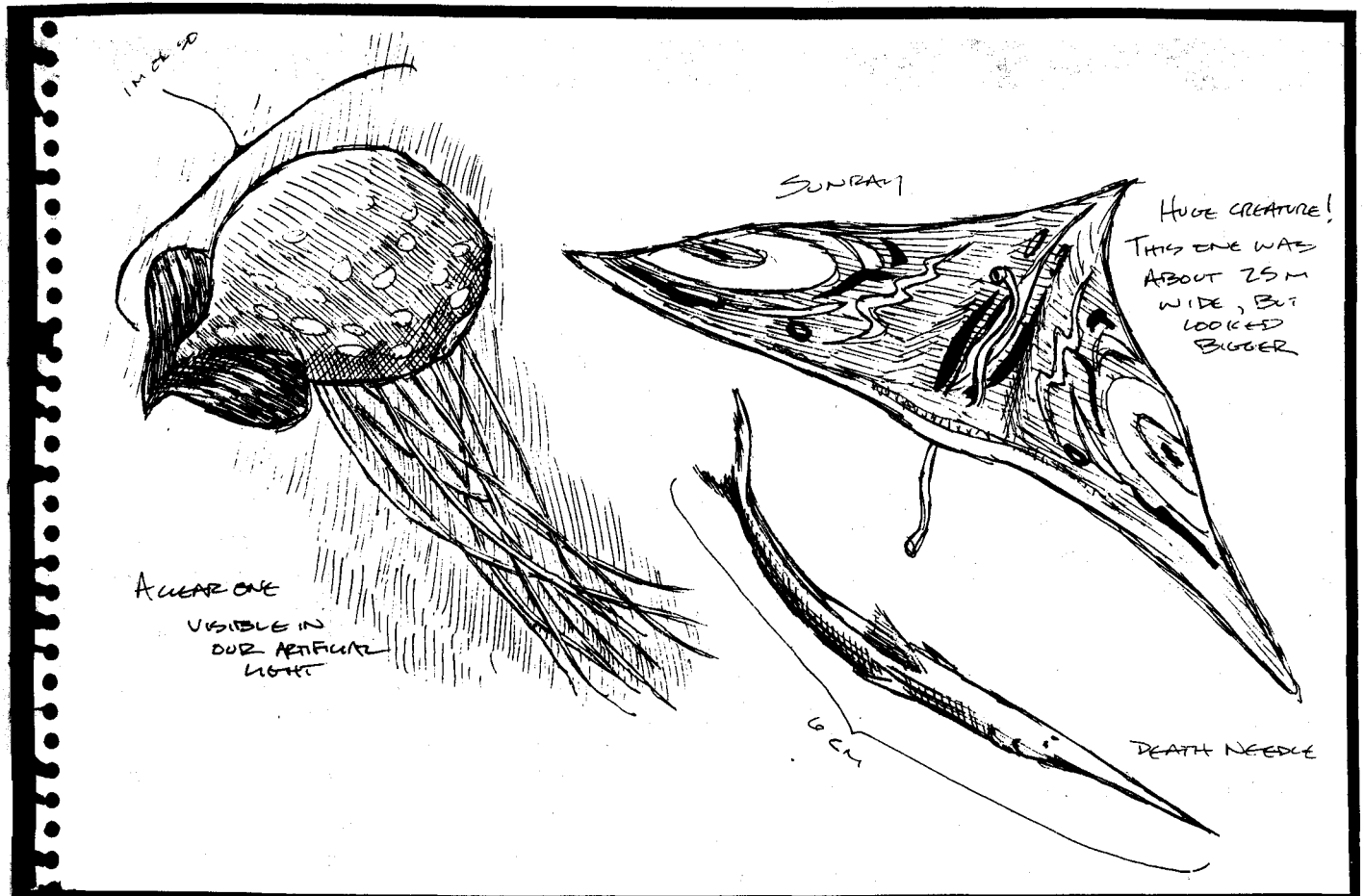
Adventure Use: Quillfish may live in the same waters as a local sports fish, and woe to anyone who hooks a Quillfish instead! Poisoned Quillfish darts may be used by native assassins or primitive tribesmen.

Sunray

The enormous purple and gold Sunray has a thin, wide body like an inverted delta wing. Both above and below its body are curving eyestalks ending in luminous eyeballs as big as street lights. Its mouth is a bony grid that runs along its wing's leading edge. It feeds on tiny fish and plankton, sifting them out of the water as it flaps slowly on its way.

Adventure Use: the Sunray's imposing size (a typical specimen is 25 meters across and 15 meters long) and bright patterns may give some character's pause, but it is essentially harmless; unless it accidentally tips over a boat with one of its wingtips.

Tyrant Crab

This creature is an elongated pseudo-crustacean about 1 meter across and 1.2 meters long. It has a conch-like shell and eight segmented legs. The front two legs are equipped with giant pincers. The crab has two eyestalks, with large, compound eyes.

Tyrant Crabs live for as long as some species of Terran tortoise, and a few have survived for up to 130 Earth years. They live in the mud on the sea or lake bottom, and come ashore in migrations of forty or fifty once every twenty years to fight over the right to mate. Tyrant Crab mating battles are very fierce, and the Tyrant Crabs will attack anyone who disturbs them in their bliss.

Adventure Use: A beach party for visiting dignitaries could be disturbed by an early Tyrant Crab swarming; the PCs could be caught in the middle or hired to rescue a trapped group of VIPs. Also, locals might arrange gambling games to bet on the outcome of the mating fights.

		Base	Max. Pace/	Speed	Size/		AT	Prime/Second/Tertiary	#	Outlook
Type	Lvl	Rate	MN Bonus	MS/AQ	Crit	Hits	(DB)	Attacks	Enc.	(IQ)
Balloonsquid	8C	20	Run/0	SL/MF	H/-	300D	3(0)	80LGr(8x)/100HBi√/—	1-2	Hungry(NO)
Clear Ones	2B	25	Spt/10	MF/MD	M/-	25B	1(20)	20SGr(2x)/—/—	1-5	Altru(IN)
Death Needles	1A	30	Spt/30	FA/FA	T/-	1A	1(60)	80LBi(100)/—/—	100-500	Hostile(NO)
Living Island	20E	20	Jog/0	SL/SL	H/SL	5000G	20(0)	—/—/—	1	Passive(VL)
Quillfish	2A	10	FSpt/30	MD/MF	S/-	15A	3(30)	Special/—/—	1-5	Normal(NO)
Sunray	5C	20	Spt/20	MD/MD	H/SL	500E	4(0)	55HBa/—/—	1-2	Aloof(VL)
Tyrant Crab	3B	10	Run/20	SL/MD	M/II	140C	12(0)	50MPi(2x)/—/—	5-50	Aggres(NO)

27.0

DEEP WATER ECOSYSTEM

The ocean depths are cold and dark, and creatures have adapted to provide their own light or to substitute other senses for sight.

Unless adventurers engage in a deep-diving expedition (perhaps in search of a sunken starship) these creatures will be rarely encountered by normal swimmers, but occasionally one may be chased up from the depths by predators, seaquakes or volcanoes.

Deep water is the natural ecosystem of the Inyx race, and creatures from this section may be used to populate the waters of Inyx-inhabited planets.

Constrictor Fish

This predator appears to be a 5 meter-long disembodied octopus tentacle, covered in suckers, with both ends ending in a streamlined point. It moves with an undulating motion, and hunts by sensing changes in water pressure. It lives amid ooze and weeds on the sea or lake bottom.

The Constrictor Fish strikes from concealment like a boa constrictor, wrapping itself around its prey and crushing it to death. Once it has killed, it drags its victim back to its lair, remaining wrapped around it, and chewing with its "suckers" which function like dozens of tiny mouths, slowly bloating as it devours its prize bit by bit.

Adventure Use: While only a middling threat to armed adventurers, the menacing Constrictor Fish is just the thing for the armor-glass aquarium of the GM's latest master villain. A session of "feeding the fish" and even the most incompetent minions can be given new spirit!

Decapus

A phosphorescent octopus-like creature about the size of a dog, with a sac-like body, a single lidded eye, and ten tentacles. It generates a powerful electric shock for protection, and as a side effect, or natural warning, glows brightly. It is about as smart as a cat, and is very friendly to humans in much the same way as a dolphin.

In combat, Decapus Grapple attacks deliver an additional Electricity critical at the same level as their primary critical.

Adventure Use: Undersea colonists or aquatic humanoids may keep decapi as pets, guards, or mobile reading lamps.

Electric Whale

These are huge (40 meter long, 10 meter wide) cone-shaped fish that somewhat resemble backwards space shuttles, with large inverted delta wings, and a high dorsal fin above the head.

They are grazers, preying mainly on plankton-like organisms, but they have evolved a powerful defensive mechanism to deal with attackers. The Electric Whale gets its name from its ability to generate a powerful electrical charge, and project it at some distance. Treat this as a Stun Rifle attack, but with a 50 OB and 1/10 normal range, delivering Electricity as well as Stun criticals. They can deliver an unlimited number of shocks.

Adventure Use: Except for a distressing tendency to try to mate with passing submarines, this creature is relatively harmless. GMs may wish to use it as the original "host" for the Inyx race — in that case, it will often be found on worlds inhabited by Inyx.
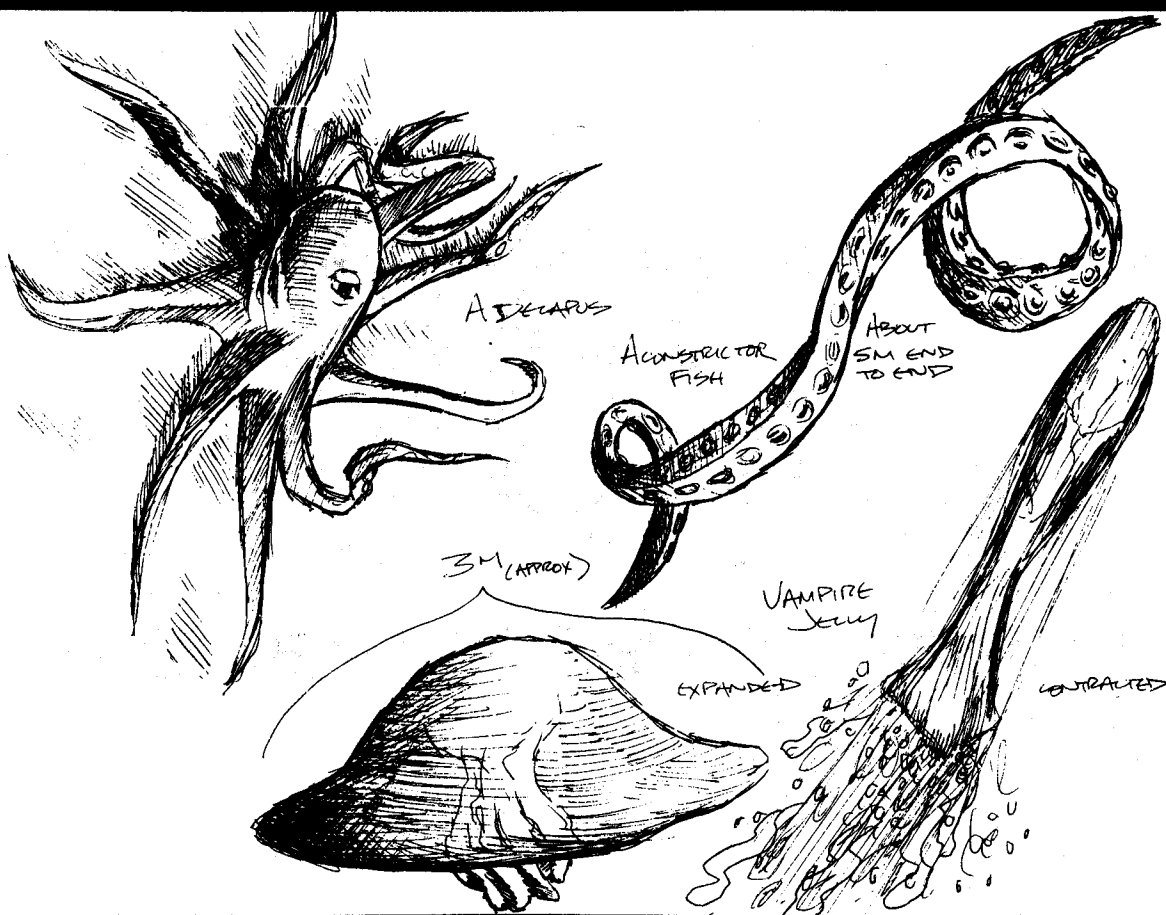
Floating Mouth

A 2 meter-long, bulbous fish whose most prominent feature is a giant mouth with needle sharp teeth, though it also has four small eyes. Its jaw can unhinge even further to swallow very large prey — it could eat a man with a single gulp. It has three long antennae; one trailing on either side, and one facing forward. These produce a soft white glow.

Adventure Use: Floating Mouths are always hungry, and not picky about what they eat.

Pulsejet

The torpedo-shaped Pulsejet is one of the fastest water creatures known to exist, reaching speeds of up to 40 km/hour underwater. 8 meters long, its streamlined semi-transparent body is constantly expanding and contracting as it takes in water through its gill intakes, compresses it with powerful gut muscles, pumps it through its body, and ejects it out its tail in a high velocity jet to provide thrust. It is a predator, ramming at high speed with its dolphin-like head, then using its sharp teeth to shred its stunned victim. It hunts in packs of 2-20, often making mass attacks on large creatures.

Adventure Use: Because of their high speed, characters adventuring underwater may mistake scanner images of Pulsejets for incoming torpedoes! An undersea race like the Inyx might tame or gene-engineer Pulsejets as mounts or even living weapons.

Shapers

These creatures are cooperative semi-intelligent carnivores that resemble meter-long tentacled slugs. Their name comes from their habit of building hive-like structures on the sea floor or river bed, using their dexterous tentacles and a natural "glue" that the female Shapers can secrete out of their mouths.

Their primary building material is the bones of other sea creatures. If they find a suitable creature (one with a skeleton), the Shapers will incorporate its skeleton into their construct, sometimes whole, other times dismembered.

A Shaper has two sets of tentacles. The first set of a eight dozen tentacles clusters about its mouth; they are 30 centimeters long, transparent and highly flexible, and resemble the tentacles of a jelly fish or sea anemone. They are used to draw food into its mouth, and also possess poisonous stingers that can paralyse creatures of up to human size. This is a 7th level (var. B) nerve poison attack. The second set of four tentacles emanates from the body of the Shaper; they are longer and much stronger, and are used to grab prey and hold it motionless while it is being stung.

Adventure Use: The Shaper's castles of bone may be spotted by adventurers, who might believe them to be the work of aquatic aliens. Explorers may discover human skeletons (or armor) from a ship-wreck has been incorporated into a Shaper hive. An undersea culture (not necessarily a human one) may be able to tame or genetically program the Shapers to build dwellings for them.

Vampire Jelly

This primitive life form resembles a giant pale white jellyfish 3 meters across, without tentacles. It usually hunts in packs of one to ten individuals. Its body constantly expands and contracts, sucking in water and expelling it in a propulsive jet, and can reach speeds of up to 20 km/hour. It senses its prey through changes in water pressure, and attacks by enveloping its prey and sucking away its victim's life fluids. Treat the victim as if affected by a 12th level (var. C) reduction poison.

Adventure Use: These are simply obnoxious monsters to harass adventurers. However, they also taste very good (somewhat like jellied spiced chicken), and brave locals or adventurers may hunt them in order to sell them as delicacies.

Type	Lvl	Base Rate	Max. Pace/ MN Bonus	Speed MS/AQ	Size/ Crit	Hits	AT (DB)	Prime/Second/Tertiary Attacks	# Enc.	Outlook (IQ)
DEEP WATER ECOSYSTEM CREATURES										
Constrictor Fish	2B	20	Spt/20	MD/MD	M/-	50B	4(10)	70MGr/100LGr√/—	1	Normal(NO)
Decapus	2A	25	Spt/15	MF/MF	M/-	30A	3(20)	40MGr(3X)/Special/—	1-5	Playful(LO)
Electric Whale	8D	30	FSpt/30	MF/MF	H/SL	700G	4(40)	60HBa20/50Special80/—	1-2	Aloof(LO)
Floating Mouth	6C	15	Spt/10	MD/MD	M/-	60B	4(10)	60LBi/—/—	1-2	Hungry(NO)
Pulsejet	9E	100	Dash/50	BF/BF	L/LA	220E	3(30)	100HBa/90LBi√/—	2-20	Aggres(VL)
Shaper	3B	10	FSpt/20	MD/MF	M/-	50B	1(10)	50MGr/70SSt√/Poison«	11-20	Normal(LI)
Vampire Jelly	5C	30	Spt/10	MF/MF	L/II	200E	1(10)	80LGr/Poison«/—	1-10	Hungry(NO)

28.0

GAS GIANT ECOSYSTEM

Gas Giants are huge planets like Jupiter or Saturn; worlds with a dense core surrounded by a hydrogen-helium atmosphere thousands of kilometers thick. Gas giant atmospheres, alien though they are, actually contain many of the complex compounds necessary for life to evolve.

Gas giant ecosystems are usually airborne, existing in the turbulent upper atmosphere rather than in the furnace-like temperatures and crushing atmospheric pressure that prevails closer to the planetary surface. The most common life forms will be a form of "plant" life, drifting upper atmosphere "plankton" resembling giant dandelion seeds, bubbles of foam, or puff-balls.

Gas giant biochemistry (probably methane-based) is totally incompatible with that of most races. Since many of these creatures use hydrogen gas for lift, any space-suited character "eaten" by a gas giant creature is likely to give it indigestion or worse when his suit ruptures and releases oxygen within the beast's stomach! (GMs may wish to consider inflicting 5D10 hits, plus a "D" Heat critical.)

Hydrogen Wasp

This is a 30 meter wide creature with a triangular delta winged body with a mottled pink and red coloration, and a long whip of a tail. It functions as a living ram jet, compressing gasses through intake-like orifices in the leading edges of its wings, and expelling them out its rear end.

Hydrogen Wasps use sonar to locate their prey, with a range of several kilometers. They hunt in squadrons, taking turns making attack passes at their targets, attempting to ram at high speed, then snag the stunned body of their prey in their tail and savage them with their powerful crystalline teeth.

Adventure Use: A formation of Hydrogen Wasps will endanger even heavily armed adventurers who venture outside their vehicles.

Metapod

This enormous floating creature is a gigantic undulating mass of writhing pseudopods, joined at the center but with no real body. Each pseudopod is studded with warty gas bags filled with hydrogen, and contains its own independent nervous system: the Metapod is actually a form of colony creature, with several "minds" sharing the same body. Each pseudopod is 50 meters long and about 2 meters thick, making the entire creature some 100 meters in diameter. The creature is carnivorous, its tentacles reaching through ammonia or water vapor clouds in search of food.

The Metapod attacks by ensnaring its prey in an unbreakable grip, crushing it. Every pseudopod can attack individually, or ten can combine into one attack on a single, large target. Once the victim is dead, the pseudopods secrete digestive fluids, dissolving prey in a matter of minutes.

A single Pseudopod is been destroyed when it takes 200 concussion hits.

Adventure Use: Characters exploring a gas giant may have to escape this creature's embrace, or may intervene to rescue an intelligent gas giant dweller such as a Sheol Messenger from its hungry clutches.

Parasol

This huge filter-feeder is buoyed up by a large umbrella-shaped body two hundred meters in diameter. It maintains altitude by hydrogen gas stored in its body; it can vent the gas to control its altitude. Beneath the gasbag is the "umbrella handle" — a smaller cylinder 80 meters long and 15 meters across, with a large circular mouth 10 meters wide, surrounded by two slender tentacles forty meters long. The smaller body expands and contracts constantly, sucking in the gas giant equivalent of plankton, which the creature feeds upon.

Parasols are living capacitors, using the gas giant's background radio energy to charge powerful biological batteries. Their mouth tendrils are capable of generating powerful electrical bolts, which it uses to defend itself against predators. Treat each bolt as equivalent to an Assault Stunner, except that criticals are Electricity instead of Stun. After firing four bolts it requires a Parasol one minute to "recharge" during which time it is virtually defenseless. As a result, these creatures often float in close formation, so that individuals can "cover" each other.

Adventure Use: A wealthy holovision crew hires the party to film the dramatic battles between lightning-wielding Parasols and gas giant
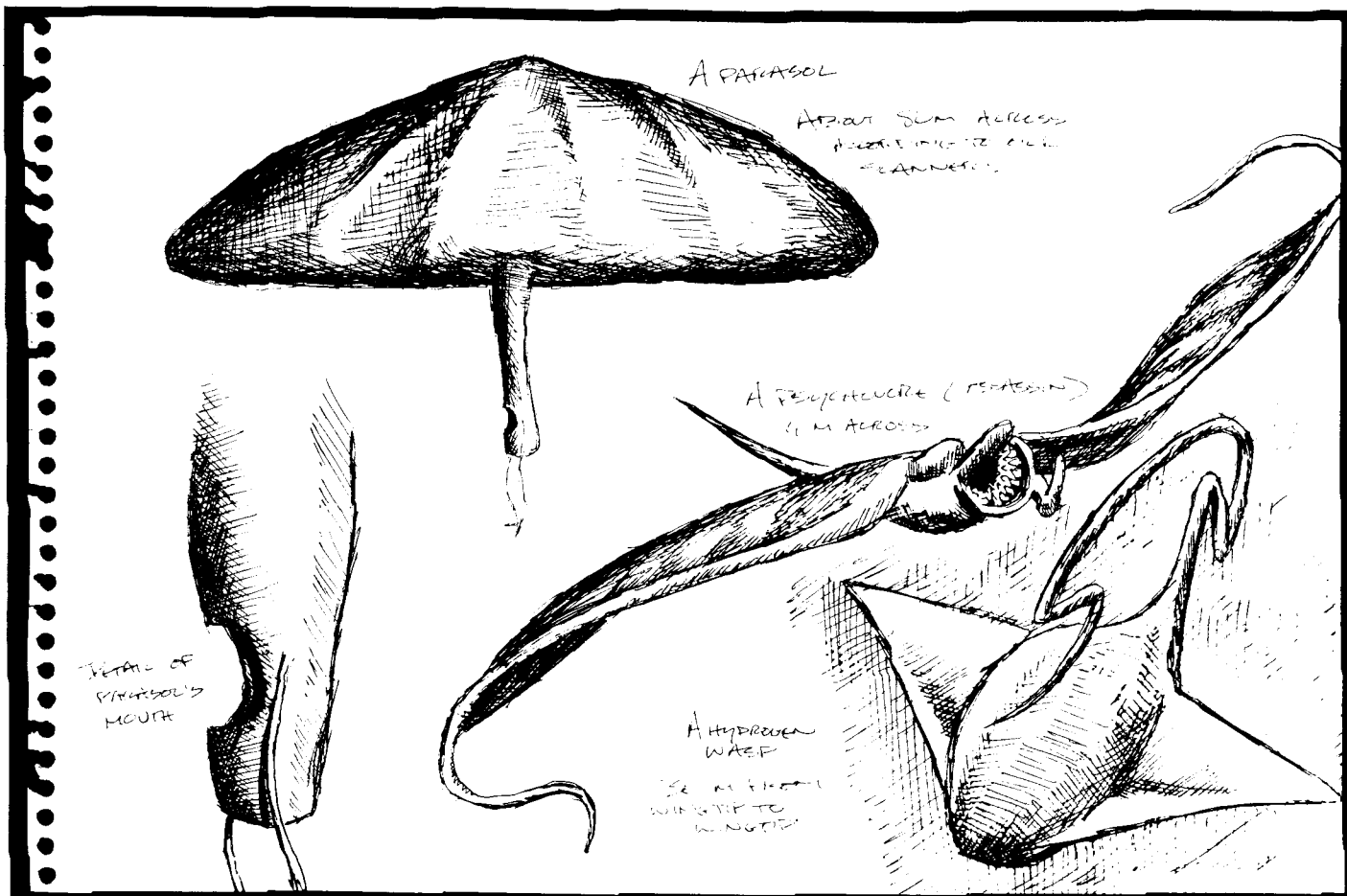
predators like Metapods or Hydrogen Wasps. But filming from a starship would likely scare the creatures off, and a drone would be too easily jammed by the radio background, and any way, robots are too impersonal. The documentary should have a human face. The film company's solution? Send in the party on high power grav belts, wearing environmental suits. Ya, right. Good idea.

Psychovore

Psychovores are semi-intelligent parasites that prey upon the giant Squid Mothers of the Sheol (see *Alien Races*). They look like flying manta rays, about 4 meters across, with mottled purple skins and twin tentacles sprouting from their wing tips. Their large mouths are filled with thorn-like growths that function as teeth. They are eyeless, and hunt by sonar with a range of 100 meters.

Psychovores have two sexes: Breeders and Assassins. Breeders look like Assassins, except that they are twice the size, and have semi-transparent abdomens through which can be seen egg sacks containing dozens of pear-shaped pulsing eggs. Assassins outnumber Breeders by five to one (round down). For instance, a group of 22 Psychovores will have 4 Breeders.

A Psychovore's shape is similar to that of a Sheol Messenger, and as a result they can sometimes fool a Squid Mother's radar into letting them get close enough to enter the Mother's body. Psychovores usually enter the Squid Mother through the same vents and sphincters that the Messengers utilize. Sometimes they are able to enter by stealth, but more often they are spotted by vigilant Messengers. If this happens, the Assassins will lead the assault, trying to protect the Breeders and kill or drive out all the defending Messengers.

GAS GIANT ECOSYSTEM CREATURES										
Type	Lvl	Base Rate	Max. Pace/ MN Bonus	Speed MS/AQ	Size/ Crit	Hits	AT (DB)	Prime/Second/Tertiary Attacks	# Enc.	Outlook (IQ)
Hydrogen Wasp	7D	50	Dash/50	FA/FA	H/SL	700E	3(20)	120HBa/140HGr√/130HBi√	1-20	Aggres(LI)
Metapod	10E	30	Dash/40	MD/MD	H/SL	Spec	3(10)	150HGr(20x)/—/—	1	Hungry(LO)
Parasol	8D	20	Dash/20	SL/SL	H/SL	500D	3(0)	50Spec(2x)/—/—	1-20	Protect(VL)
Psychovore *Assassin*	5C	50	Dash/50	MD/MF	L/II	120C	4(0)	90LGr(2x)/100LBi√/—	5-50	Aggres(IN)
Psychovore *Breeder*	6C	40	Dash/40	MD/MD	H/LA	200C	4(0)	70HGr(2x)/100HBi√/—	5-50	Aggres(IN)
Squid Mother	20G	30	Spt/20	MD/MD	H/SL	10,000G	12(0)	150HGr(20x)/200HBi√/—	1+	Passive(AA)
Hungry Seeds	10F	40	FSpt/40	MF/MF	H/LA	4,000F	12(0)	100HGr(20x)/150HBi√/—	1-10	Normal(AV)

If the Assassins succeed in defeating the Messengers, any remaining Breeders will make their way into the Squid Mother's inner chambers, and begin eating their way into its giant brain to find a place to lay their eggs. This takes 100 hours divided by the number of Breeder Psychovores who survived the battle (e.g., if 3 Breeder Psychovores survived, then it lasts for 33 hours).

While the Breeders burrow into the brain, some Assassins will defend the entrances to the Squid Mother against any counter attacks while others mount search and destroy missions into the Squid Mother's interior to destroy any hidden Messengers (or visiting humans) who survived the initial assault.

The Assassin's goal is to prevent any Messengers stopping the burrowing Breeders — if they are all killed before they reach the Brain, the Squid Mother will survive. If the Breeder Psychovores reach the brain and lay their eggs, the pain will drive the Squid Mother insane. The Squid Mother will live for 80-90 days, when the eggs will hatch. During this time, the Squid Mother will be a mindless killer that will attack any creatures (including other Squid Mothers) that cross its path.

Adventure Use: Psychovore attacks demonstrate a great degree of coordination, but just how smart are they? Could they be a primitive intelligent race? A wealthy xenological institute wants to find out one way or another, and hire the party to capture some live Psychovores — ideally, both a Breeder and an Assassin. The institute will provide environmental cages to hold the specimens, but the mission may also be complicated by the Sheol, who believe that the only good Psychovore is a dead one!

Squid Mothers & Hungry Seeds

Sheol Squid Mothers and their offspring, the Hungry Seeds, are fully described in Part I, *Alien Races*. Their statistics are provided in the *Gas Giant Ecosystem Creature Table*.

29.0

EXOTIC ECOSYSTEM

There are many exotic environments where the conventional Terran-based "ecosystems" are inapplicable. Creatures evolving on these planets will be very strange indeed, and are unlikely to have biochemistries compatible with humans. "Vegetation" on such worlds may also be unusual — creatures that blur the distinctions between plant and animal. There may be living electrical batteries, or beings composed of silicon or crystaline structures, for instance.

The atmospheres of exotic worlds may kill an unprotected human in seconds, if the extreme temperatures don't get him first. Cold worlds may have methane or ammonia-based life, though creatures on these worlds will generally be slow and sluggish, though they may possess some form of catalytic biological supercharger to allow brief spurts of energy. On very hot (150+° C) worlds, fluorine and chlorine may replace carbon as the basis of life, perhaps using sulfur instead of water as the life medium. Most such life forms would be anaerobic, with oxygen a deadly poison.

A CRYOSUNG — The one which attacked Doctor Pertwee. He should be released from the hospital in time for next year's expedition

A megaslug — nearly 60m long!
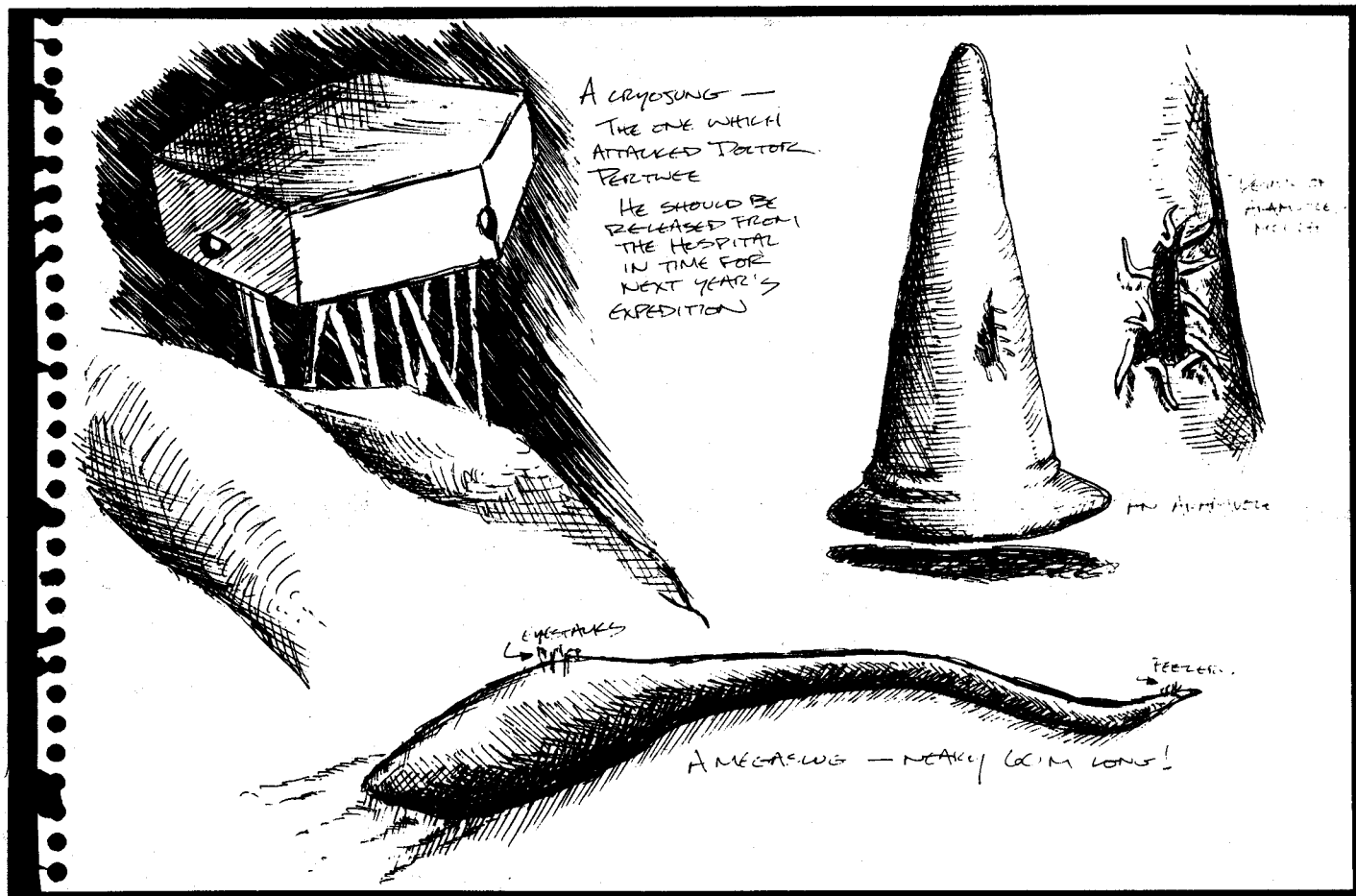
Another type of "exotic" environment is the "super terrestrial" many times larger or denser then Earth, with a gravity of 1.5 Gs or more. While the atmosphere may be a conventional oxygen-nitrogen mix, atmospheric pressure will be very high — at least equivalent to the gravity, and quite likely much higher. Due to the high gravity, creatures are likely be low slung, either with many short legs, or worm-like or slug-like invertabraes.

Aramvole

Evolving on a cold ammonia or methane atmosphere world, this weird creature resembles a pale blue cone resting on a wide base; the cone's only feature is a single maw, a triangular opening partly covered by a cobweb-like grey membrane. Gas is constantly being sucked through the opening, creating a whistling sound. Around the edges of the mouth radiate ten pale worm-like cilia, constantly waving back and forth. The creature floats a few centimeters off the ground, riding a cushion of air. It is 2 meters tall, and weighs about 120 kg.

The Aramvole is a psionic predator. It projects a mental "web" that makes everyone who fails to resist (versus a 15th level telepathic attack) perceive it as a maternal, warm, friendly creature that they want to be with. Anyone who fails to resist will walk toward the creature, dropping all weapons, as immense feelings of good will and togetherness wash over them. When a victim arrives, he will continue to experience an ecstatic joy in his dismemberment, knowing he will part of the creature forever.

Adventure Use: The Aramvole is a suitable "monster" for the GM to place in a lair within the crash-landed alien starship or ancient deserted elder city that the characters will soon be visiting. Aramvoles might also be "tamed" through telepathic means by a cunning character or master villain.

Cryojung

This creature evolved on a chlorine or fluorine atmosphere world. It has a smooth, greenish-bronze colored hexagonal body with eight legs having ball bearing style joints, giving it a semi-mechanical appearance. Each leg ends in a wicked looking pincer-claw. Its four eyes are recessed into armored nacelles, and are evenly spaced around their body, giving 360° vision. The Cryojung is 1.5 meters wide, and weighs about 300 kg. Their bodies are very tough, with a hexagonal bone structure that makes them very difficult to injure.

Cryojung are predators, spitting webs of sticky organic teflon to ensnare their prey. Treat this exactly as a Tangle Pistol attack, using OB 45, except that Rate is only one shot per round. The creatures can spin ten webs in a one-hour period, but then must wait until their metabolisms can manufacture more tanglefluid.

Adventure Use: Cryojung have no interest in eating carbon-based life such as adventurers, but a character trapped in their web may find his air running out if he cannot escape in time! With their strange appearance they could be mistaken for robots.

Megaslug

Evolving on a high gravity super-terrestrial world, these huge 60 meter-long creatures have rubbery, flexible bodies like elongated slugs. A low hump rises at one end of the body, topped by three eye stalks — the creature's braincase. Its opposite end terminates in five feelers which look like segmented insect legs, and a slit mouth, from which project two long tongues. As they move, they leave a trail of viscous slime. They are omnivores, eating both plant-forms and animal-forms; in fact, anything they can get their mouth on.

Adventure Use: Megaslug slime might have some interesting properties, perhaps being highly flammable, or even intoxicating if properly treated. Otherwise, these are creatures to stay away from!

EXOTIC ECOSYSTEM CREATURES										
Type	Lvl	Base Rate	Max. Pace/ MN Bonus	Speed MS/AQ	Size/ Crit	Hits	AT (DB)	Prime/Second/Tertiary Attacks	# Enc.	Outlook (IQ)
Aramvole	10D	5	Jog/0	VS/VS	M/-	100B	10(30)	Special/70LBi/—	1-2	Hostile(IN)
Cryojung	9C	40	FSpt/60	VF/VF	M/II	150C	17(30)	130MPi(4x)50/45Spec50/—	1-5	Hungry(LO)
Megaslug	13D	5	Walk/0	CR/CR	H/SL	900E	11(0)	200HTs60/120HBi40/—	1-5	Hungry(VL)

30.0

VACUUM ECOSYSTEM

The vacuum "ecosystem" actually subsumes a wide range of possible habitats whose only common feature is their lack of atmosphere. Most vacuum-dwelling creatures will either live in the cometary halo (where ice water and complex hydrocarbons may be available, but solar energy is relatively scarce), on barren moons or planets (especially those near a sun), or within asteroid belts or interstellar gas clouds. But even more exotic habitats are certainly possible.

Creatures evolved to live in the absence of atmosphere, water and gravity tend to be either very simple or extremely complex. An example of a sentient race evolving in this ecosystem is the Avatar species, described in Part I, *Aliens Races.*

Coracle

This silicon-based creature is flexible, bowl-shaped being, 200 meters wide and 100 meters thick. Its body, made of something similar to organic plastic, envelops and slowly crushes small carbonaceous and ice asteroids, deriving nourishment from them.

It munches the occasional nickel iron asteroid as well, but stores the material instead of digesting it. When it needs to move, it generates powerful electromagnetic flux within its body, to function as a living magnetic linear acceleration, expelling waste nickel-iron nuggets for thrust or for defense. They are simple grazers, with animal intelligence, only interested in eating and defending themselves.

The Coracle is best treated as a spacecraft, with tonnage/hits of 1,000 to 10,000, sublight acceleration rating 1 (10 km/sec/sec), and no translight ability. It has a limited natural "radar" sense, with EW 25. Their thick bodies have CAT 23, DB 25.

Although starships are not high on their list of favorite foods, Coracles could envelop any ship foolish enough to be in the same place they are.

Adventure Use: The sight of a Coracles enveloping an asteroid can provide jaded adventurers with a new insight into the diversity of the universe's life forms. A mining company (or culture, such as the Ileet branch of the Lithkind) might find a way to harness Coracles as living factories, perhaps with the silicon-equivalent of "genetic engineering." These beasts might have been genetically engineered in the first place, and somewhere an artifact might be found revealing the secret of controlling them.

Dreadnought

A metallic silicate lifeform, this creature is a streamlined, tapered cylinder, one kilometer long and fifty meters wide, and massing tens of thousands of tons. One end of the cylinder is a large mouth; the other tapers into a tail, from which it expels waste products. Often these "waste products" include valuable heavy metals or radioactive materials, refined into a concentrated form by its arcane digestive processes!

Dreadnoughts are psionic life forms, with powerful brains solely devoted to generating telekinetic force fields which can only affect themselves or things inside them. Using their immense TK powers, Dreadnoughts "bootstrap" themselves along through space. They possess a natural radar sense (EW 60) which enables them to spot their prey.

Dreadnoughts live within asteroid belts and cometary halos, feeding on creatures such as the Coracle. However, spacecraft contain just the right mix of metals and silicates (in plastic, etc.) to make a tasty snack. Their TK powers also function internally, enabling them to crush, process, and digest anything they eat.

Dreadnoughts are treated as spacecraft, not as creatures. Use the *Star Strike* rules if they are available. These creatures have 25,000 hits, and CAT 23. Sublight Acceleration Rating is 5 (50 km/sec/sec). They have no translight capacity or screens, but have OB 150, DB 50. They can attack by ramming. A successful ram attack on any ship under 1,000 tons that inflicts an "A" or better critical means that ship has been swallowed whole, and will automatically take 100 points of damage each turn. A swallowed ship can still fire (interior DB is 0, with CAT 21), but cannot maneuver, being held motionless by the Dreadnought's internal TK.

Adventure Use: While Dreadnoughts may serve as "space monsters," an imaginative GM can come up with other scenarios to use them. An asteroid-dwelling culture could use their hollowed-out bodies as spaceship hulls, or even live on their surfaces, for Dreadnoughts would not notice anything so puny as a group of humans without a ship. A criminal organization or government could develop special lures or other means of taming them as living weapons, and the characters may be sent in to discover that secret. Finally, daring adventurers may risk attack to follow after the Dreadnought to pick up its valuable (1-10,000 Elmonits per chunk) waste products; usually a Dreadnought excretes 1D10 "nuggets" within 10 hours of feeding on a coracle or spaceship-sized object. The danger, of course, is that the Dreadnought's radar might detect the "prospectors" if they get too close, while if they follow too distantly, they might lose its trail.

Hydrogen Snake

These creatures look somewhat like very small comets, but lack any solid core. They have a spherical body some 100 meters across that is composed of densely packed ionized gas, and a kilometer-long trailing tail. Spreading in front of them are invisible (except to sensors) "wings" of electromagnetic force. These capture and compress interstellar hydrogen, funnelling it into the snake, ionize it in the core, and expel it out the tail as thrust, accelerating at about 30 km/sec/sec (Sublight Rating 3). Hydrogen Snakes change direction by polarizing their own magnetic fields to interact with the background magnetic field of the galaxy.

They are denizens of nebulae or other hydrogen-rich areas of space. They are too frail to exist within a strong gravity well, and would be torn apart by a star's or planet's magnetic field, so they must remain in interstellar space or on the fringes of any solar system.

They scan other beings through a form of magnetic sensing and as a result, individuals who are not surrounded by a lot of metal or electronic gear (e.g., a person in a normal vacc suit outside a spaceship) are all but invisible to them. They are not intelligent, having no more "mind" than an insect.

Hydrogen Snakes will not attack ships or individuals, even in self defense, and are quite timid of large objects like spacecraft. However, the highly focused electromagnetic fields they use are quite dangerous to organic life forms. Any physical lifeform who gets within 500 meters of one of them will suffer a class "C" Radiation critical each round (reduced to class "A" if wearing AT 17 or better armor or an Absorbtion shield, Barrier shield, or Deflector shield.

Adventure Use: Hydrogen Snakes are herded by the Avatar race, and used as food animals. Following a group of Hydrogen Snakes might lead a ship to an Avatar clan. Characters forced to abandon ship in interstellar space may also encounter Hydrogen Snakes, perhaps attracted by the radiation produced by an exploding or damaged spaceship. Since the Snakes cannot perceive a single space-suited person, a castaway who happens to be in their path is in danger of suffering radiation poisoning unless it can get the Snake to veer off — perhaps by rigging a suit radio to emit a high intensity focused beam of radio energy.

Jewelflowers

Resembling giant orchids carved out of ruby, these creatures live on the surfaces of barren airless moons. They are actually silicon-based plant forms. They have the ability to store solar energy, and then release it in the form of laser beams.

They grow in fields of anywhere from ten to several hundred. Most Jewelflowers in a field will be the same size; the older the field is (up to five weeks), the larger they will be. At full growth, the stem will be ten meters wide, and a flower width of 5 meters). They are passive and do not defend themselves.

Jewelflowers grow steadily from their shard-like seeds for five weeks. Then, lemming-like, the Jewelflowers will suddenly begin a "firefight" with each and every flower engaging in a massed fratricidal barrage of laser beams. The laser beams are targeted on other flowers, but characters may be caught in the crossfire.

Jewelflower laser beams are treated as laser rifles; the flowers have OB 20. When a Jewelflower is hit by a laser it explodes like a shrapnel grenade (Mk.# = to the flower's width, usually 1-5 meters). The shards, carried dozens or hundreds of meters in the low gravity act as seeds, and will gradually grow into new flowers.

Adventure Use: During an adventure set on a lunar colony or asteroid, local enemies of the party may set a trap for them, luring the PCs into the midst of a field of Jewelflowers during "firefight season."

Plasma Angel

These beings normally appear as floating spheres of ionized plasma energy about 1.5 meters in diameter, but they have can alter their shape into any form of about the same volume. They give off a
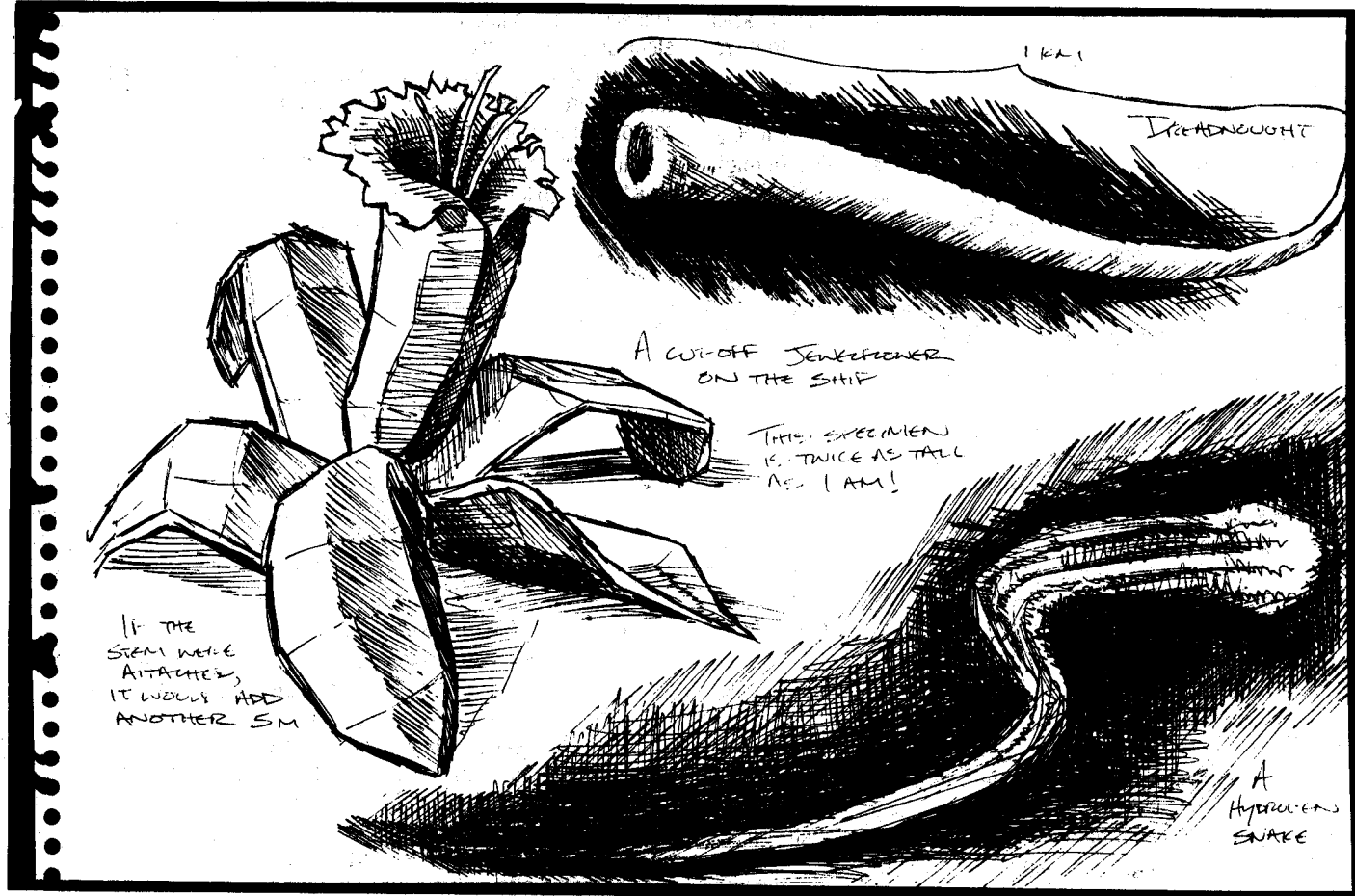
constant level of intense heat and hard radiation. They live off solar radiation, but will automatically drain the energy from power cells that are within 25 meters of them. Plasma Angels have no effect on starship power systems.

Laser beams and blaster bolts can de-ionize them, injuring or killing. Non-energy weapons have no effect upon them!

They are naturally telepathic, though non-sentient, and will often pick up the thoughts of people who are nearby, sometimes altering their shape into images of what that person most wants to see. A lonely crewman thinking of his girlfriend back home might look out the view screen and see a glowing humanoid figure with a vaguely feminine shape. They also "remember" particularly strong (emotionally) mental images (e.g., a space battle or disaster, and sometimes project those instead).

Adventure Use: Characters who are hunting for a missing ship might find eerie but useful clues in the images of Plasma Angels who witnessed its fate. Avatars (see *Alien Races*) may use Plasma Angels as "biological recorders" to store data.

Solarian

Not strictly vacuum creatures, these strange beings live inside stars. Different species may exist in different stellar types, but all will have roughly similar characteristics.

Solarians resemble balls of light about 10 meters across. Like Plasma Angels, they are organized creatures of ionized plasma, feeding on electromagnetic or nuclear energy forces. Although there seems to be little reason for them to evolve sentience, GMs may wish to give them an intelligence or even a culture. Communication might be a problem if no one is a telepath! Their touch attacks on the Flamer attack table, with a +100 OB and a Mk.5 threshold.

Adventure Use: To even meet with Solarians takes some effort. A heavily armored probe equipped with massive heat sinks and force fields may be able descent into the upper levels of the stellar atmosphere, but due to heat build-up, couldn't remain there for long. By flowing over such a probe, the Solarians could overload its heat sinks, with catastrophic results if it failed to escape quickly enough. Certainly they would shrug off most weapons with ease, and any missile launched at them would melt before it reached them! Of course, they need not be hostile. Perhaps their actions are just an attempt to communicate. Maybe their sun is unstable, and they need help!

Singularity Disks

Looking like spinning silver disks, 5 meters in diameter and impossibly thin, these strange multi-dimensional creatures live just within the accretion disk of black holes, waiting in hyperspace, surfing on the edge of the gravity warp surrounding the singularity's edge. As material is sucked into the black hole, they drop from hyperspace like cosmic trap-door spiders to feed upon it before it vanishes into the hole's event horizon. Singularity Disks can "hover" in hyperspace, without moving. It takes one round for a Singularity Disk to enter or leave hyperspace

Singularity Disks feed on the energies (X-rays and gamma rays) released as matter falls into a black hole. If a spaceship or other high energy object approaches a black hole, they may decide to forgo their normal diet and feed on its power plant's energies instead, perhaps even hitching a lift upon it.

When a Singularity Disk feeds, no equipment will function within a 25 meter area, and all power cells and cartridges are drained when it approaches. Microfusion reactors and vehicle power systems will

gradually lose energy, but can be restarted when it leaves the area. Their digestive processes are odd: energy is absorbed, then re-radiated with the particle spin reversed.

They can be communicated with through telepathy. Singularity Disks have a rudimentary intelligence, and in any case will have difficulty comprehending the idea of organic beings as alive (it might believe in computers or spacecraft).

They are unaffected by any form of projectile or melee attack. Against energy attacks (including plasma grenades and power swords) it is AT 20, and is immune to criticals. Every 100 concussion hits it takes reduces its radius by 1 meter and its energy drain range by 5 meters. After taking 500 hits, it is destroyed.

It does not physically attack, they do emit secondary radiation as a result of their digestive processes. Anyone coming within 5 meters of it takes one "B" radiation critical each turn unless wearing a fully sealed suit of armor, in which case only an "A" critical is taken. Characters in sealed vehicles with CAT armor are immune.

Adventure Use: A ship visiting the vicinity of a black hole (perhaps to conduct scientific experiments or religious rites) may be ambushed by Singularity Disks. The danger is that the Disk will feed on the ship's reactor's energy, thus shutting off the drive and shields. If the ship was not in a stable orbit at the time, it may be in danger of being dragged by gravity into the black hole. That is unless the characters can defeat, befriend or drive off the Disk in time to restart the engines!

Starwisp

This is a living solar sail, 500 kilometers across. Part of the energy it collects goes into powering its metabolism. It can store a residue of energy in its biological batteries, and use it to magnetize itself, using the galaxy's background magnetic field to turn about.

The Starwisps can gather light and focus it as a laser beam by rippling the sail. This is an automatic reaction, occurring against anything that blocks or occludes the light falling on their sail. The effect is that of a Mk. 10 laser cannon with 180° arc of fire and +50 OB. They have +50 DB versus laser fire.

Adventure Use: Spacefarers may mistake a Starwisp for a ship powered by solar sails. Starwisp bodies could be valuable to makers of solar panels, leading to the creatures being hunted. Avatar may have tamed Starwisps, to use as living laser cannons or signalling devices.

Tinsellite

Tinsellites appear as long strands of silvery streamers trailing behind a glittering ball-like 'head'. They are from 10 to 50 meters in length and 5 to 20 meters wide, but only a few millimeters thick.

Tinsellites are silicon-based with their structure held together by electromagnetic force. They feed on energy from all parts of the electromagnetic spectrum and are peaceful creatures, neither predators nor prey. They ride the solar wind through space, usually alone, reproducing slowly in an as yet unknown fashion.

High-powered energy blasts will damage them, though they are able to absorb small arms fire. They cannot survive in gravity, as their body collapses and dies within seconds. They can accelerate at up to 10 km/sec/sec.

Adventure Use: Tinsellites will sometimes be found trailing a slow-moving spaceship, bathing in the energy of its drive. As exotic creatures, Tinsellites could fetch a good price from zoos or decadent Imperial nobles, for they are beautiful to watch. But keeping one alive could be a problem: they need to be stimulated with a variety of different energy sources, or they will wither and die.

Voidshark

Voidsharks are pulsing globes of energy, living manifestations of the strong nuclear force who dwell in the dark voids between the stars. Most live in cometary haloes, sweeping space clean of dust, gas, and cometary ice, converting matter into energy. Denser matter, such as a spacecraft's hull, drives them into a feeding frenzy.

A Voidshark's touch dissolves the nuclear force that binds atoms together, resulting in disintegration (and a release of energy). A Voidshark that attacks an individual will usually kill him — it attacks on the Melee Weapon attack table with a Mk. 5 threshold, but delivers Radiation and Heat criticals. A Barrier shield protects normally, but armor does not, so treat all targets as AT 1, though a Voidshark who wasn't particularly hungry might prefer to eat the denser armored exoskeleton rather than the character underneath. This would leave the character with radiation burns but no further damage, unless he was in vacuum at the time! Of course, there's the psychic shock of almost being eaten alive.

Although non-sentient, Voidsharks can sense the presence of electromagnetic energy and can detect the low-level millimetric radiation given off by most objects. They are immune to most forms of attack and all physical weapons, but determined fire by powerful particle beam or laser weapons can overload them, causing temporary or permanent disruption.

Adventure Use: A spacecraft may encounter a pack of Voidsharks. In large numbers, they could even damage a ship's shields. Voidsharks are natural foes of the Avatar race (see *Alien Races*) and characters may be hired by Avatar to help protect their starbeast herds against them.

Type	Lvl	Base Rate	Max. Pace/ MN Bonus	Speed MS/AQ	Size/ Crit	Hits	AT (DB)	Prime/Second/Tertiary Attacks	# Enc.	Outlook (IQ)
Coracle	10D	SR1	—	—	Spec	Spec	23(25)	Special/—/—	1	Normal(VL)
Dreadnought	20E	SR5	—	—	Spec	Spec	23(50)	Special/—/—	1	Normal(LO)
Hydrogen Snake	7C	SR3	—	—	H/-	100A	1(40)	Special/—/—	2-20	Timid(NO)
Jewelflowers	1A	0	—	—/MD	M/-	25A	17(0)	20Special/—/—	10-100	Passive(NO)
Plasma Angel	6B	SR1	—	VF/—	M/-	100B	20(50)	—/—/—	1-10	Inquis(VL)
Solarian	11D	SR1	—	MF/MF	H/-	300C	20(50)	100Special/—/—	1-5	Normal(MD)
Singularity Disk	10D	Spec	—	FA/FA	L/Sp	500C	20(20)	Special/—/—	1-5	Hungry(VL)
Starwisp	9C	SR1	—	MD/MD	H/SL	5,000F	12(Sp)	50Special/—/—	1-10	Passive(VL)
Tinsellite	5C	SR1	—	MF/—	H/-	200C	1(0)	—/—/—	1-2	Passive(NO)
Voidshark	12D	SR3	—	BF/BF	L/-	Spec	1(80)	120Special/—/—	1-10	Hungry(VL)

VACUUM ECOSYSTEM CREATURES

PART III — ARTIFACTS

ALIEN EQUIPMENT

This section presents items of equipment unique to each of the major starfaring races described in this book. These devices are intended to add to the "flavor" of an alien encounter, by giving each race a few unique technological items.

A range of "unique" devices have been provided for the Drakarans, Evantha, Inheritors, Inyx, Lithkind, M'sia, Shai-en-Rin, Spyders and Tezcat. No gadgets are listed for the Avatar and Sheol, who use living creatures rather than devices, or for the Devi, who have no technology. Valkyrie and Metamorphs use the technology of their host races rather than designing their own.

Some equipment may be useful enough that other races may want to import it, or make copies. GMs can arrange for such gadgets to be available for sale in the Imperium or other regions of human space, perhaps at a hefty mark-up: "Look at the latest Deathwand that DeBarton Enterprises imported from the Inheritors — wow! I just wish House Devon companies could build this stuff so we didn't have to pay the extra tariffs on it."

Alternatively, characters may find it more difficult to acquire such gear, with the GM initially limiting it to alien PCs and NPCs of the race in question. This can help inspire scenarios: an enterprising PC decides he wants a pair of Drakaran gravity gloves. No Imperial company stocks gravity gloves, so the PC must travel to a Drakaran world if he wants to buy the device; which can be an adventure in itself.

POTENCY

Items in this book are rated as either Modest, Potent, Most Potent, or Artifact.

Modest items are gadgets that the man on the street could have access to, at least if local laws didn't get in the way. They can be easily produced by existing technology, and GMs should make these available to any character who wants to make the modest effort necessary to acquire them.

Potent items are devices that (if the Imperium made them) would be on the cutting edge of present technology. GMs may decide that these items are limited to government organizations, major corporations, and so on.

Most Potent items are extremely powerful, and could unbalance a game if used improperly. These items should always be on the level of military secret weapons, ancient archaeological finds, and the like. Scenarios can be centered around acquiring these devices, or the plans to manufacture them. In general, the Imperium could make its own copies of Most Potent items, but it may require a major research and development effort to do so.

Artifacts are not capable of being manufactured in the Imperium, or by most other races. These are the kind of objects that equip Shai-en-Rin starships or the artifacts that archaeologists dream of finding at Sianetic Harbinger sites. Wars may be fought over their possession.

POWER SUPPLIES

Many of the following pieces of equipment require power supplies to function. Consult the following key to determine which power supplies are needed.

*: Cell
†: Cartridge
‡: Pack
§: Microfusion Reactor

DRAKARAN ARTIFACTS

Drakaran technology tends to be rugged and simple, at least in application. However, their quest for simplicity and truth has led them to master many of the fundamental principles of the universe, including gravity and the strong nuclear force.

Gravity Glove

(†) Used for handling dangerous objects such as radioactive materials, this is a glove-mounted anti-grav projector and attached control helmet. It acts as an invisible "waldo," enabling the wearer to manipulate an object at a distance, without actually touching it.

To use a Gravity Glove, the user must wear a special helmet which is connected to the glove by a cable. The control helmet enables the user to "see" a virtual reality 3-D graphic of the invisible "hand" of gravitic force stretching and moving. By moving his own hand in the glove, the user can control the anti-gravity "hand," enabling him to effectively extend his own reach by up to 20 meters. The "gravitic" hand has an effective Strength of 100. Note that while the "hand" is invisible, it cannot reach through solid matter.

A gravity glove control system may be built into any standard combat helmet at an additional cost of 500 Elmonits. *Potent*

Gravity Net

(§) This large vehicle-mounted or tripod-mounted device projects a focused contra-gravity beam that raises or lowers local gravity over an adjustable 5 to 50 meter radius. Originally intended to pin down noisome pests, this device has been modified into a heavy weapon useful for riot control or taking captives.

The weapon has a 250 meter range. It requires an entire minute to operate, during which the gunner must focus the device on the target area. Roll to hit, using Heavy Energy Projector skill. If the result is over 100, the Gravity Net is on target. If it is under 100, consult the Launcher Error Chart (*Player Book*, p.60) to determine where the effect is actually centered.

When a Gravity Net is focused on an area, it can increase the local gravity by up to 2.0 Gs. For instance, if the gravity was presently 0.8 Gs, it could raise gravity in the area to anywhere between 0.9 and 2.8 Gs. This has two effects:

First, the sudden increase of gravity may cause people to fall over, possibly injuring themselves. If gravity is increased without warning, anyone in the area must make a Moving Maneuver roll to stay on his or her feet (use Alien Environments or Acrobatics skill as appropriate).

Second, even if they can stay on their feet, everyone in the area will suffer a penalty to movement rate. To determine the penalty, divide the current gravity field (as modified by the G-Net) by the character's home gravity, and multiply his movement rate by the amount. Also, the character will have a penalty on all Moving Maneuvers: see the *Movement and Encumbrance Chart* (*Player Book*, p. 71). *Potent*

Example: *Christin Bjornson is caught in a gravity net, which raises local gravity to 3 Gs. Christin has a WMR of 20 and is native to a 1 G gravity field. Her home gravity (1) divided by the present gravity (3) gives a result of 0.33. Multiplying her WMR by that, we find that in the next turn, her WMR will be 6.6. Checking the chart in the Player Book, we find she also has a -50 on all moving maneuvers!*
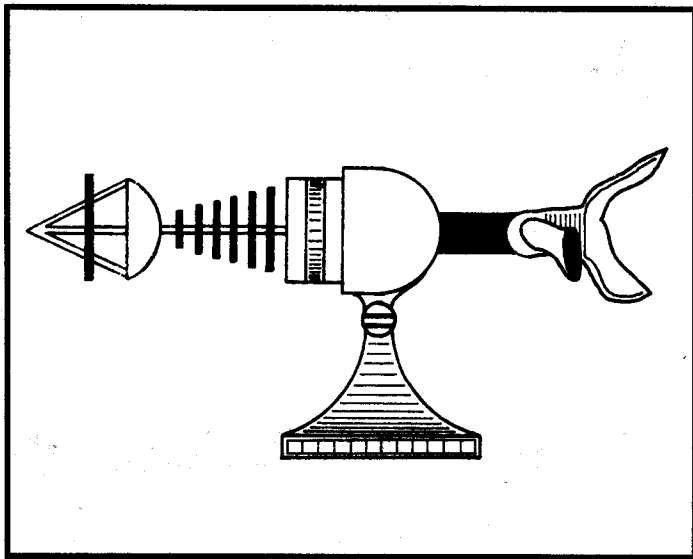
Neutron Blasters

Drakarans are good high energy physicists, and the neutron blaster is one example of their expertise, combining their skill in this area with their talent for gravitic engineering.

Neutrons are heavier then electrons or protons (the subatomic particles that form the standard "particle beams" used in standard blasters), which makes them a lot more dangerous. Neutron beams deliver a secondary Radiation critical of one level less than the primary critical. Furthermore, if the target is heavily armored the neutron beam will actually interact with the dense armor material, producing an intense burst of "secondary radiation" — if a neutron beam hits an AT 17+ target, roll *two* radiation criticals instead of one.

Unfortunately, Neutrons are neutral (no kidding), making them more difficult to manipulate, since they can't be kicked around electromagnetically. Neutron blasters thus require a slightly higher level of technology in order to generate oscillating gravitic fields capable of particle acceleration, and this in turn means they are less reliable due to increased power consumption — failure number is 8.

Neutron blasters are available in all standard sizes, from mini-blaster to heavy blaster: see Blasters, on p.8 of the *Tech Book*. They are slightly heavier and more costly then normal blasters, as the *Alien Equipment Table* shows. *Potent*
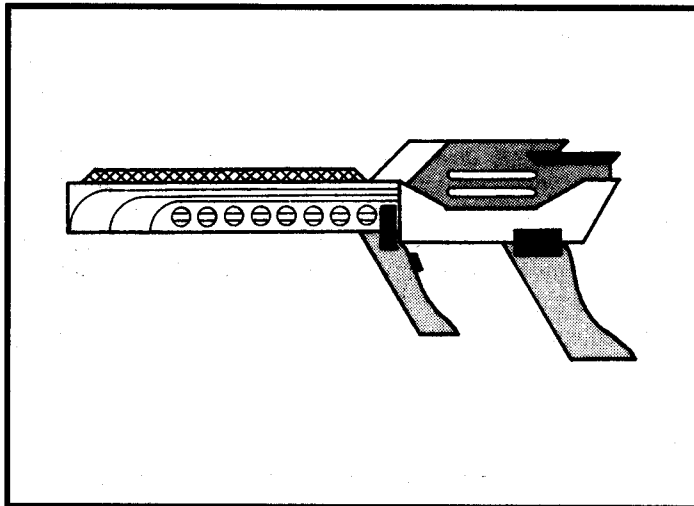
Nuclear Disruption Field

This device disturbs the strong nuclear force. The result is that any operating nuclear reactor in the area of effect will tend to go out of control. All antimatter, fission or fusion reactors, including microfusion generators, within range of the field will be affected.

Every five minutes that a reactor is within the radius of a nuclear disruption field, make an 1-100 roll.

A roll of 01-10 means the reactor overloads. Full size reactors become nuclear bombs; a microfusion reactors explode as Mk.5 Plasma Grenades.

A roll of 11-40 or less means the reactor has gone critical (if an antimatter or fission reactor) or shut down (if a fusion reactor). A critical antimatter or fission reactor will begin to go out of control unless emergency measures are taken to shut it down first. This will require an *Extremely Hard* Power System Tech skill roll, with one roll being allowed every five minutes. Two successes in a row shut down the reactor safely. A fumbled roll or two failures in a row result in a melt-down (fission reactor) or an explosion (antimatter reactor).

A roll of 41-100 means the reactor continues working normally, but its power levels fluctuate enough to warn anyone looking at its readouts that something is wrong. Roll again for effect in five minutes if no one takes the hint and shuts it down.

Two varieties of Nuclear Disruption Field are normally available:

Tactical Nuclear Disruptor: (4‡) This device is the size of a backpack and weighs 20 kg. Its field covers 50 meter radius around it, meaning that to affect anything other than a Microfusion generator it will usually have to be physically carried right into the reactor room. Of course, this should not detour the determined saboteur. *Potent*

Strategic Nuclear Disruptor: This device weighs 2,000 kilograms and takes up 1 cubic meter and runs off the vehicle or spaceship's power plant. It is typically mounted in a vehicle or spaceship. It has a range of 50 kilometers, and its field covers a 1 kilometer radius. *Most Potent*

EVANTHAN ARTIFACTS

Vanthians are known for their stylish modifications to existing technology. Being a warlike people, their major "contributions" to galactic technology have been military.

Most of the systems used by the Vanthians (particularly laser sights and cyberlinks) are available to elite Imperial or other race military forces as well, but the Evantha (unlike many other races) don't believe in cutting costs, and so tend to equip *all* their units with them.

Cyberlink

(*) This is a helmet-mounted pupil scanner that uses a laser to register the user's eye movements, automatically focusing computer image intensification, range information, and targeting cross-hairs on the exact point the user is looking at. This gives a +10 to Perception rolls and a +5 bonus to OB.

A Cyberlink may be connected to one of three different kinds of advanced targeting sight by an optical cable. The cable/sight connection costs 50 Elmonits, and takes one round to attach or detach.

Any standard environmental suit, sentinel helmet, or combat helmet may be fitted with a Cyberlink system. *Modest*

Laser Sight

(*) This targeting system can be mounted on any personal weapon. It consists of a low-power continuous beam laser that puts a visible dot wherever the gun is being pointed. This makes the weapon very accurate (+15 OB). However, the laser will not function in fog, smoke, or anti-laser aerosol and the dot can only be seen at a range of about 100 meters or so.

A Laser Sight can be used with a Cyberlink; if so used, the combined OB bonus is +20, or +25 OB if the Cyberlink is connected by an optical cable to the laser sight, enabling the laser to feed range finding and targeting data to the user's helmet.

Laser Sights may be used by any technological race who have eyes and use ranged weapons. *Modest*

Televisual Sight

(*) Known as a TVS, this is a computerized image-enhanced gun sight camera that can be mounted on any standard personal weapon. The sight can be switched between visual, low-light, and infrared settings. This system requires a Cyberlink (see above). The helmet is connected to the TVS by a short optical cable. When the TVS is turned on, the user's normal vision is cut off, and the helmet displays an image seen through the gun sight camera instead! All the user needs do is move his arm to center the crosshairs on the screen. If he does this, he's right on target.

When a TVS is turned on, the user has a narrower field of view (-15 Perception, instead of a cyberlink's normal +10), but his weapon becomes very easy to use (+15 OB instead of the normal +5). Also, a TVS enables the user to do some sneaky tricks, like leaning around a corner with only the gun exposed, and still being able to see the target perfectly! *Potent*

Laser Televisual Sight

(2*) The LTVS is a combined laser/televisual sight. In addition to painting the target with a laser aiming dot, the laser is tied into the TVS computer, and provides exact range finding information, displayed in alphanumerics next to the targeting crosshairs, plus the ability to "shoot round corners" the TVS gives. As with a normal TVS, the gun sight must be attached to the Cyberlink helmet by a short optical cable.

The LTVS gives a +30 OB bonus (the whole is not equal to the sum of the parts) and a -15 to Perception. If the TVS system is turned off, the user gains the +25 OB and +10 Perception of a combined laser/cyberlink system.

An LTVS is more fragile then a standard laser or TVS sight, and its components are easily knocked out of alignment by rough handling (e.g., fumbling and dropping the weapon). If this happens, all bonuses are lost, and the user's helmet Cyberlink may "fuzz out," in which case he may have to perform the embarrassing and dangerous expedient of opening his visor to see out! *Potent*
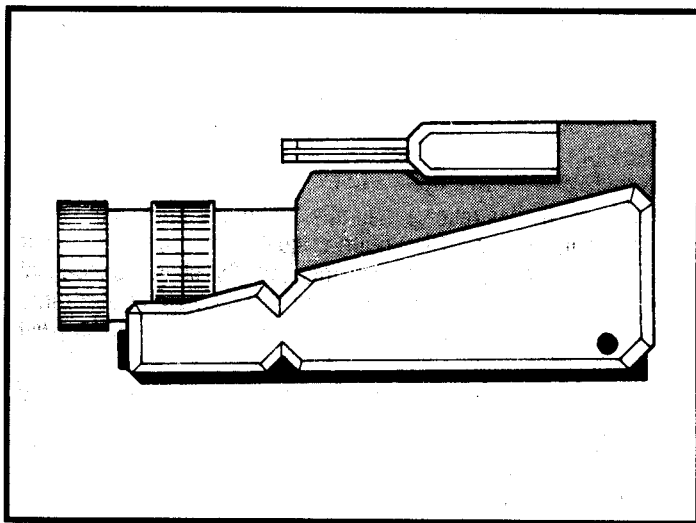
Heatseekers

Developed for long-range combat on the open plains of Evantha, heatseekers are miniature rocket slugs with smart microprocessor brains and infrared sensors. They maneuver with tiny fins that fold out after firing (and are thus useless in vacuum). They may be fired from any rocket gun. A heatseeker is treated as a normal bullet, except that it suffers no range penalties, since the round keeps accelerating (until it runs out of fuel) and a more distant target gives the heatseeker more time to aim itself. Instead of suffering a penalty, half (round down) of the *absolute value* of range penalties are added to the chance to hit: this means a +15 to hit at MR (instead of -30) and +45 at LR (instead of -90).

To avoid them hitting cars, trees, etc., heatseekers are programmed to look for heat patterns whose shape and intensity are characteristic of the mammalian body; because of this narrow window, they will not work when fired at non-living targets and robots, although androids designed to mimic living beings may have an identical infrared signature and thus allow heatseekers to track them — perhaps a case of being built too well! GMs may reduce or negate the bonus (suggestion: -15) when fired at alien races with a lower body temperature range, such as the Drakarans, or at animals such as "cold blooded" reptiles.

Although they "lock on" to the person the weapon is pointing at when the firer pulls the trigger, heatseekers may still be confused by multiple targets: a heatseeker's bonus is reduced by 15 if the character is within 5 meters of other individuals, or if another person is in the line of fire. Body heat from multiple targets confuses the seeker head. A heatseeker can also be blinded by sudden explosions or intense fires, which will increase DB by up to 50.

Example: *Rudi Rudi is pinned down behind a haystack by six distant Evantha with rocket carbines. Rudi's own mini blaster is out-ranged and things are looking grim since the Evantha heatseekers aren't affected by range. Deciding to even the odds, he lobs a plasma grenade into a nearby pickup truck, setting off the hydrogen gas tank. Assuming Rudi isn't roasted, the GM rules that the resulting fireball gives him +50 DB vs Heatseekers that round and +25 on succeeding rounds until the fire burns out.*

Heatseeker magazines more expensive than normal rocketgun ammunition. Furthermore, the rockets are slightly longer (though they are the same caliber) to incorporate the sensor head and extra fuel; as a result, only half as many slugs are included in a typical clip. *Potent*

Scramble Grenades

(*) Designed for use in Evantha's dense atmosphere, Scramble (SB) grenades are miniature sonic generators. They burn out within 20 seconds after use, but while operating, they emit a terrible subsonic vibration so powerful that it can cause eardrums to rupture, flesh to melt, and internal organs to explode.

Scramble grenades resolve their attacks on **SM's** *Grenade Attack Table*, delivering Internal Disruption criticals. In addition to other effects, any time a critical is achieved, their is a 10% chance per critical size (10% for A, 20% for B, 30% for C, etc.) that a victim's eardrums will rupture, deafening him. Ear protection (e.g., a sealed helmet) will halve this chance.

These grenades are sonic in operation: since sound is carried by air, in vacuum or very thin atmospheres they have no effect, and in thin atmospheres their blast radius is halved. But under water or in denser-than-normal atmospheres (such as that of Evantha) sound travels better, and blast radii are doubled! *Potent*

Scramble grenades range in size from Mk. 1 to Mk. 5. They come in hand-thrown, RPG, missile and launched versions. There are three variations of the grenade:

1) **(PDSB)** grenades have warheads with restricted burst radius to allow their use at close quarters, or for pin-point attacks. Each blast radius extends outward from the detonated grenade only one (1) meter per Mk.#.

2) **(SB)** grenades form the basis of this series, having standard blast radii. Each blast radius extends outward from the detonated grenade two (2) meters per Mk.#.

3) Enhanced Scramble **(ESB)** grenades have abnormally large blast radii. Each blast radius extends from the detonated grenade to a distance of three (3) meters per Mk.#. In addition, any Internal Disruption criticals are rolled twice, and all results are applied to the target.
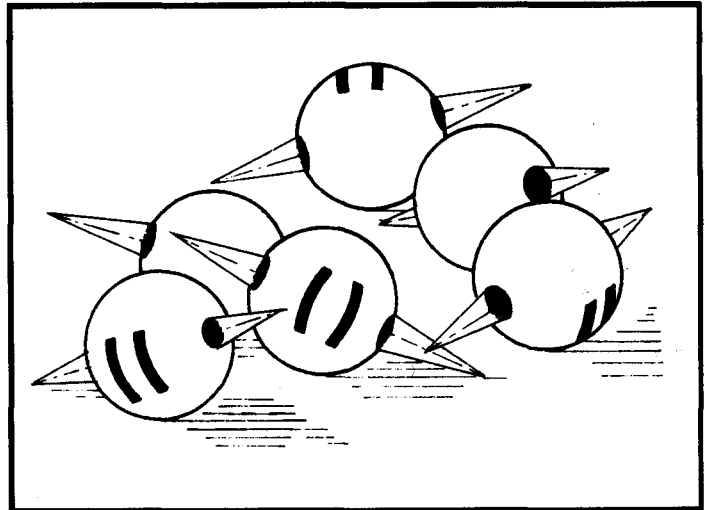
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INHERITOR ARTIFACTS

Inheritor devices have a tendency to be somewhat gimmicky and over-complex, making them difficult (-20) to repair if they break down. Despite this, their multipurpose utility has led to a great demand for them, and several human companies have sprung up that exist simply to import Inheritor gadgets. Since the Inheritors have eight arm/legs, this requires making some necessary modifications (in hand grips, power cell compatibility, instructions, etc.) to enable them to be easily used by humans.

Deathwand

(§) The primary defense of Inheritor Queens and their elite Warriors, this weapon is an evolutionary design rather than embodying any new principles. As with most Inheritor technology it is flashy, micro-miniaturized and somewhat over-engineered.

The deathwand is a small plasmatic repeater weapon using advanced room-temperature superconductors to reduce the size of cooling and magnetic containment systems. As a result, it is only the size of a large submachine gun. This remarkable feat of miniaturization has come at a cost, however: the weapon is slightly less powerful

than a plasma rifle, and is none too reliable. While this is tolerable in a weapon designed as a sidearm for elite personal guards, it has kept the deathwand from replacing lasers as a common weapon for most Inheritor soldiers. *Potent*
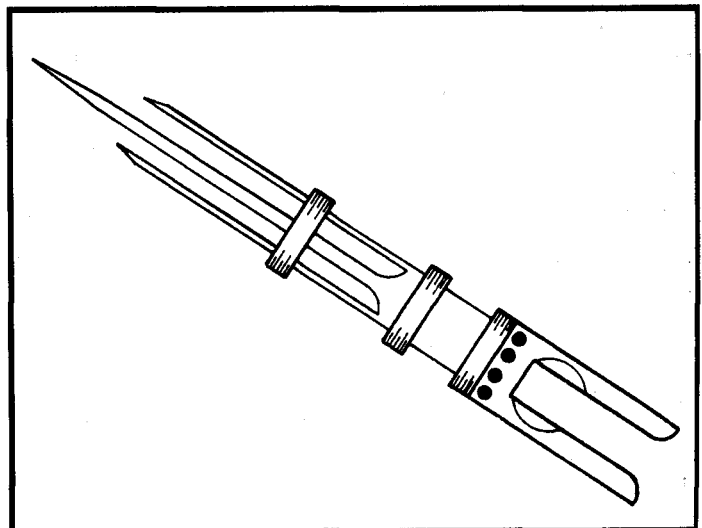
It has the following statistics:

Type: 1 H Energy, **Rate:** 2 burst, **F** 12, **PB** 3 (+15), **SR** 15 (0), **MR** 20 (-30), **LR** 50 (-90), **Table Used:** Blaster Mk. 4, and the power supply is a microfusion Weapon Pack.

Organic Nutrient Processor

(§) Nicknamed the "meat machine," this device converts any organic substance into edible protein paste similar to that found in concentrated ration tubes, removing harmful toxins and viruses and adding any necessary vitamins and nutrients. Inside the machine, microscopic robots break down the materials chemical bonds and create others and out comes nutrient paste, manufactured in the same way that an animal or tree turns the same raw materials into protein. As long as there is a source of compatible organics, food can be created indefinitely, though its store of vitamin-supplements will run out after about one person-year of constant use.

Nearly any organic substance can be used in the processor: compost, grass, worms, whatever. It works automatically, taking ten to sixty minutes (depending on the quality of the raw material) to process enough for a single meal. In its raw state the end product is not too tempting, a bland tasting paste or dry, flaky cake, invariably gray, brown or greenish-mauve — but is perfectly edible. However, by specially programming the machine, it can synthesize flavor additives and coloring that turn the basic fare into attractive food dishes, although this requires three times the normal processing time. The processor can also distill simple organic compounds, like alcohol.

Organic Nutrient Processors were designed for the Inheritor metabolism (enabling visiting Inheritors to turn human food — or garbage — into something they can eat), but can be programmed to produce food that matches the metabolic requirements of almost any protein-based race. Because of this feature, it's important to check the settings to make sure that the "species" controls are set for "terrestrial biochemistry" (or whatever) to avoid food poisoning! *Potent*

Multicom

(2*) A typical over-engineered Inheritor device carried by Drones and Queens, this communicator is half the size of a paperback book. Although slightly larger and more expensive than an Imperial pocket communicator, it offers many features not available in the standard model.

The Multicom has a voice range of 1,000 km, giving it orbital capability. If communicating with another Multicom (or similar system), the user can transmit and receive images as well as audio, allowing "face to face" visual communication (unless one of the parties turns off the camera system on the Multicom). Although the Multicom has no screen, it doesn't need one: it generates a 3-D hologram in the air above the device.

The Multicom can record all audio/visual conversations for up to 100 hours, and does so automatically. It can also play standard Memory Disks, functioning as a Holoviewer (*Tech Book*, p. 21). One of its most impressive features is its internal linguistic database that can be set to instantly translate (in text subtitles below the holographic image) up to 10 different languages stored in its memory; the Database is reprogrammable as desired, with new language chips costing ≈100 Elmonits each.

Finally, the Multicom can also be tuned to receive any local broadcast media, or to access computerized datanets and display information on its screen. *Potent*
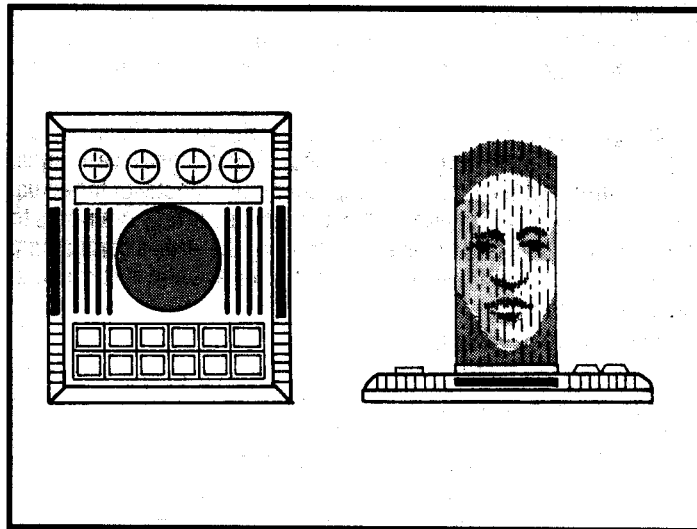
INYX ARTIFACTS

The more unique devices manufactured by Inyx are primarily products of their sophisticated "living" technology used on their own worlds. Most of these gadgets will be manufactured by Genesis corporation; modest ones may be sold to humans.

Anti-Molecutronic Virus Grenades

A new invention of CyNet corporation, Anti-Molecutronic Virus (AMV) grenades release a cloud of molecular-sized nano machines that can penetrate a computer, android, or robot, enter its "brain" and alter its programming.

Different species of the AMV exist for different circumstances, but each type of the virus has a specific set of instructions that it imposes on its target — something simple and generic like "you will shut down and wait for further instructions using (a command code)" or "you will attack anything living that doesn't look like a (insert specific race)" or the favorite "you will now obey anyone using (a specific voiceprint or command code). All previous control codes or voiceprints are invalid."

The grenade's (Mk.# x 4) is used as the attack level on the *Resistance Roll Table* (*Player Book*, p. 95). The defense level is equal to the *Computer Mk.#* for computer systems and robots, or the actual *Experience Level* of a target android. If the molecutronic brain fails to resist the virus, it is taken over and must obey the virus's commands. On the other hand, if it does resist, that particular brain is immune to that virus. *Potent*

There are three variants of AMV grenade:

1) Point Defense AMVs (PDAMV) grenades have warheads with restricted blast radii for use in close quarters. Each bast radius extends outward from the detonated grenade only 1 meter per Mk.#. The virus aerosol remains suspended for ten minutes before degrading; in a wind, it may drift (GM's discretion).

2) AMVs have a standard blast radius, extending outward from the detonated grenade by 2 meters per Mk.#. The virus aerosol remains suspended for thirty minutes before degrading; in a wind, it may drift (GM's discretion).

3) Enhanced AMV (EAMV) grenades have extended blast radii, covering 3 meters per Mk.#. In addition, the virus aerosol remains suspended for one hour before degrading; in a wind, it may drift (GM's discretion).

Bioconcrete

An invention of Genesis corporation, this is a quick hardening organic plastic foam that can be sprayed to form barriers, fill pits or repair hull breaches. It usually comes in a pressurized cannisters resembling a fire extinguisher. It has a range of 3 meters, and can fill a 1 x 1 x 1 meter area per round. It hardens in two rounds — anyone man-sized or smaller who is unable to move out of the hardening foam (e.g., grappled or stunned) time will be trapped, and will suffocate. A cubic meter of Bioconcrete foam has AT 16, and 100 hits. A can is good for 8 rounds of use (and can cover 8 cubic meters). *Modest*

Construction Coral

Inyx construction coral comes in many varieties, including luminescent species that produce or carry electrical currents, and which can be used as power conduits. Other species exist that secrete metals, forming carefully managed internal impurities that can function as electrical circuit boards for a variety of purposes.

Construction Coral is not limited to underwater use, but it must be seeded in a wet area, such as a pit filled with water. A typical single family dwelling can be "grown" using construction coral within 120 hours. The coral is genetically programmed to form rooms and leave holes for doors, windows, etc. to be installed. Such a house would cost about 10,000 Elmonits.

"Planting" construction coral involves seeding an area with an appropriately programmed polyp cluster, a process that takes about 2 hours. Each polyp cluster weighs 100 kg, and must be transported in a water-filled container. The Imperial military is considering purchasing construction coral seeds for use by engineering units, to enable them to quickly create bunkers, huts, and the like. *Modest*

Eyeblink

Yet another invention of Genesis corporation, used by Inyx-trained human espionage agents, this is a tiny plant organism that functions like a living camera when placed in the eye, and is almost completely undetectable. Chameleon-like, it takes on the coloration of the eye it is placed in (although the user cannot see out of it). It feeds off sunlight, tears, and body heat and is activated by eye muscles (typically a blink or wink held for 3 seconds). It can store up to 10 images in its internal "fleshfilm" which can then be peeled off in layers with a knife, and developed in a special chemical bath.

Both infrared and visual models are available. *Modest*

Mind Amplifier

(†) This is an experimental cybernetic implant packed with neuro-electronic circuitry. Surgically inserted, it sends electrical signals into the brain, artificially stimulating the centers that control psychic ability.

A character wearing a Mind Amplifier gets *two* power points for each point he expends. This effectively means that all psions cost only half as much to use.

A Mind Amplifier has one danger: they also amplify the effects of psionic failures. Failures occur when using a Mind Amplifier on a roll of 01-05 rather than 01-02, and the user must roll *twice* on the failure chart! Any failure also burns out the implant.

Mind Amplifiers were developed by CyNet but were soon copied by Genesis. Their use is generally restricted to elite Inyx operatives and their personal slaves, although there are rumors that Imperial intelligence agencies may have managed to acquire a few samples. *Most Potent*

Neural Sword

(†) The Neural Sword was developed by CyNet for use by and on humans and other aliens: It has no effect against Inyx. It is an blunt electrified rod whose touch delivers an electrical shock on a series of frequencies tuned to disrupt the victim's central nervous system, causing extreme pain and disorientation. Neural swords are easily recognized by their insulated hand grip and hum of power when activated.

Use the Melee attack table treating the neural sword as a short sword except that it delivers a primary Stun critical and a secondary Electricity critical, one level lower than the Stun critical (e.g., if a C Stun critical is delivered, the victim would also take a B Electricity critical, but if an A critical was scored, no Electricity critical would be inflicted).

The neural sword uses a standard utility cell for power. Fumbles have the same effect as a Power Sword or Force Knife. *Modest*
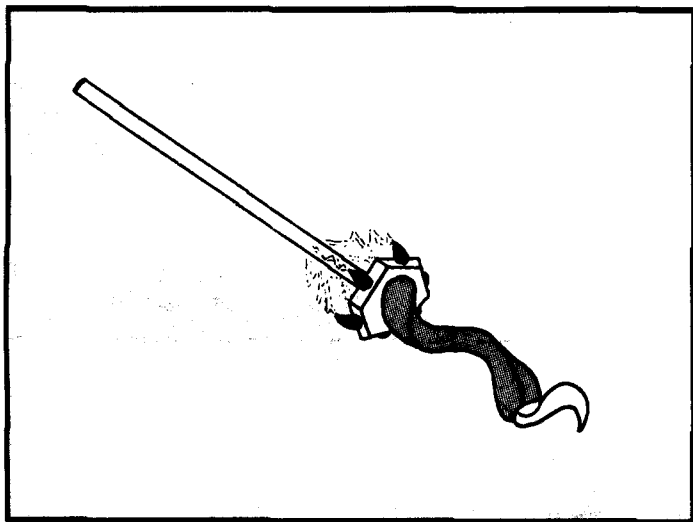
Psiberleach

The Psiberleach is a flat silvery slug-like living organism designed to feed off psychic energy. Consummate slavers, Genesis corporation developed this bio-construct to restrain the powers of captives or experimental subjects who possessed telepathic abilities.

A Psiberleach is attached to the base of the target's spine and feeds on the character's psychic energy, siphoning it off into its own body and using the power drained to maintain its link with the host. The result is that the wearer cannot use any psions or regenerate any power points. Once attached, a Psiberleach extends tendrils into the user's nervous system, and can only be safely removed by a properly coded electrical signal, delivered either through an Inyx tentacle, or a special "key."

The only other way to remove the Psiberleach without harming the host is with surgery: a successful *Sheer Folly* Medical Practice roll will remove the leach (not necessarily killing it if the doctor wants it alive). A failed medical roll, or any other attempt to remove or damage the Psiberleach will usually result in it emitting a paralyzing jolt of psionic energy into the subject's brain and nervous system. This inflicts 1-100 hits, and if more then 50 points are inflicted there is a chance equal to (damage rolled - 50) of the target being permanently paralyzed from the neck down! *Most Potent*
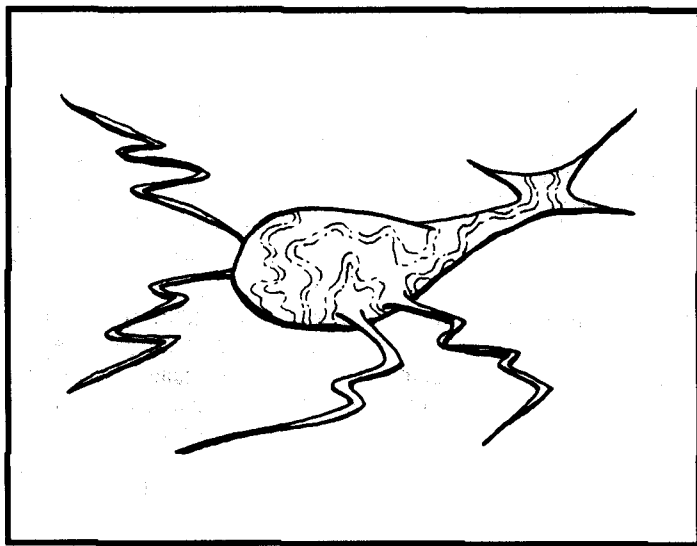
LITHKIND ARTIFACTS

Lithkind technology is very similar to that of humanity, differing only in detail, (e.g., most Lithkind devices are smaller than those used by humans, if somewhat lower powered).

Flare Grenades

A favorite infiltration weapon used by Legion of Midnight commandoes, Flare (FL) grenades detonate silently, producing a cold purple flash of light that ionizes the rhodopsin (the visual purple in the retina) in the eye, blinding anyone within the area of effect and destroying their perception of space and time. An affected character will be stunned, and when he recovers, he will have no idea of how much time has passed while he was dazed and blinded.

FL grenades are available in sizes ranging from Mk.1 to Mk.5. They come in hand-thrown, launched, rocket propelled and portable missile versions. Every FL grenade produces the requisite five blast radii when detonated. But do not resolve attacks on the *Grenade Attack Table*. Instead, if anyone is within the ground zero, they must make a level 15 RR (use Quickness instead of Constitution for resistance). Reduce the level of the RR by 3 for every blast radii out from ground zero.

A character who fails the RR is affected. *Mild* failure results in the character being stunned and blinded for 10 rounds. *Moderate* failure indicates the effects persist for 30 rounds. *Severe* failure means that the character is stunned and blinded for 10 minutes, while *Extreme* failure takes him out of action for 30 minutes. Flare grenades will only affect targets with roughly human optic systems, (e.g., humans, Evantha, Lithkind, Metamorphs or Tezcat). A character with light-filter lenses may add +50 to resistance. *Modest*

There are three variations on the FL grenade:

1) **Point Defense Flare (PDFL)** grenades have warheads with restricted blast radii to allow their use at close quarters, or for pinpoint attacks. Each blast radius extends outward from the detonated grenade only one (1) meter per Mk.#. However, the time stunned and blinded is halved, (e.g., only 5 rounds if the RR is a mild failure, up to 15 minutes for an extreme failure).

2) **Standard Flare (FL)** grenades form the basis of this series, having standard blast radii. Each blast radius extends outward from the detonated grenade two (2) meters per Mk.#.

3) **Enhanced Flare (EFL)** grenades have warheads that produce abnormally large blast radii. Each blast radius extends outward from the detonated grenade three (3) meters per Mk.#. In addition, the time a character is stunned and blinded if an RR is failed is doubled, (e.g., a severe failure would result in effects lasting for 20 minutes instead of 10 minutes).

Infinity Sword

(†) These light-weight laser weapons are traditionally used for the settlement of "ariseth" blood feuds. They are also favorite sidearms of Lithkind police forces.

Unlike normal laser weapons which fire only short pulses, the Infinity Sword laser fires in a continuous beam. It is called an infinity sword because that is how it functions, as a 100 meter sword of light that is simply waved back and forth over the target. The beam is visible to beings with infrared sight in the right frequency or to characters with properly tuned infrared goggles.

Power drain to maintain the continuous beam is enormous, requiring a backpack microfusion weapon reactor attached by cable to the weapon's hilt. Actual damage is relatively low: the infinity sword attacks as a Mk. 1 laser (its beam is under-powered), but because the beam is continuous, it receives a +40 OB bonus over normal laser hit probabilities. Deep wounds are unlikely to be delivered, but it is very easy to hit with!

At the user's option, the beam can be swung more quickly, to affect up to three targets at once, as long as they are all in front of the user and standing within 10 meters of each other. If used against two targets, the user has a -20 to OB (thus reducing the bonus to only +20) and against three, he has a -40, completely negating the hit bonus. *Potent*

The weapon has the following statistics (with the +40 to hit figured in):

Type: 1 H Energy, **Rate:** 1/rnd (but see above), **F** 9, **PB** 3 (+55), **SR** 10 (+40), **MR** 25 (+10), **LR** 100 (-50), **Table Used:** Laser Mk. 1.
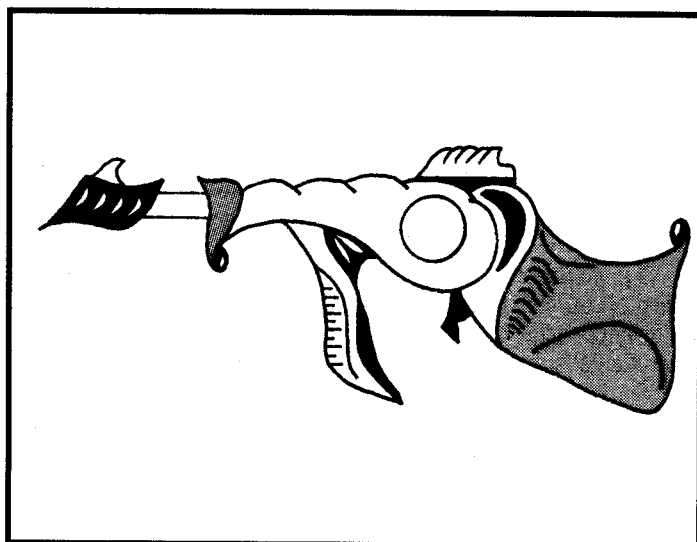
Magnatronic Key

(*) A favorite of Lithkind agents, this is a pen-sized burglary device that projects a short-ranged (eight centimeters) electromagnetic pulse intended to open electronic locks by disrupting the locking mechanism. It gives a +20 to Lockpicking skill to open any electronic lock. The beam can also be used to disrupt other electronic systems, burn out computers, etc. *Potent*

Razorwhip

One of the most deadly melee weapons known to man or alien, the Lithkind razorwhip is a powered hand grip from which uncoils 5 meters of mono-filament wire. Press a button on the grip and the monomolecular strand retracts to 1.5 meter length and stiffens into a lethal sword-blade whose monomolecular edge can cut through nearly anything.

The weapon is normally used as whip, and has the same statistics, except: it has a Mk.# of 3, can be used against targets up to 5 meters away, and delivers Slash criticals. But the razorwhip must be used with care: any fumble is potentially catastrophic. The whip can lash

back and catch around a head or limb, severing it in an instant. If a fumble occurs, add 40 to the roll (on the 1-Handed Arms table), treating a roll of 101+ as 100.

In razorsword mode, the weapon is treated as a broadsword (uses the same skill, delivers slash criticals, etc.) except that it is a Mk.4 weapon and automatically inflicts one higher Critical result than normal to a maximum of "E". (Thus, if no critical would normally be inflicted, it inflicts an "A" critical, if a "C" is indicated, it inflicts a "D", etc.)

Lastly, in whip mode the razorwhip can be spun like a buzz saw instead of being used to attack with. This enables it to be used as a shield, adding 15 to the wielder's DB, but only versus melee attacks. The wielder can attack normally with martial arts or an off-hand weapon. *Potent*
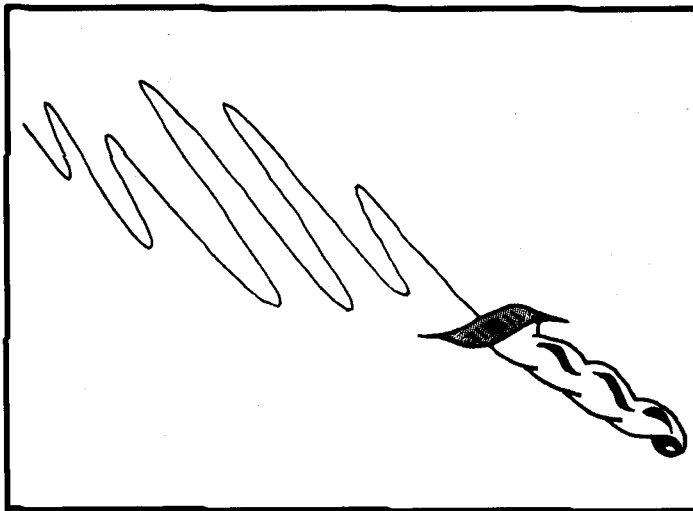
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M'SIA ARTIFACTS

A few M'sia devices date back from the time of the God Makers, when the M'sia experienced an unusual (for them) interest in exotic technology. Since that era, M'sia technological development has stagnated (at least from a Terran perspective). Many of the old techniques and devices have since been lost, although a determined archivist might be able locate the plans for them by researching obscure computer files on Life Bearer, the M'sia homeworld.

Actual working "Old M'sia" devices occasionally turn up on primitive worlds, for the God Maker's reach was long, and the Institute for Ethical Solutions was not fully successful in cleaning up everything they left behind.
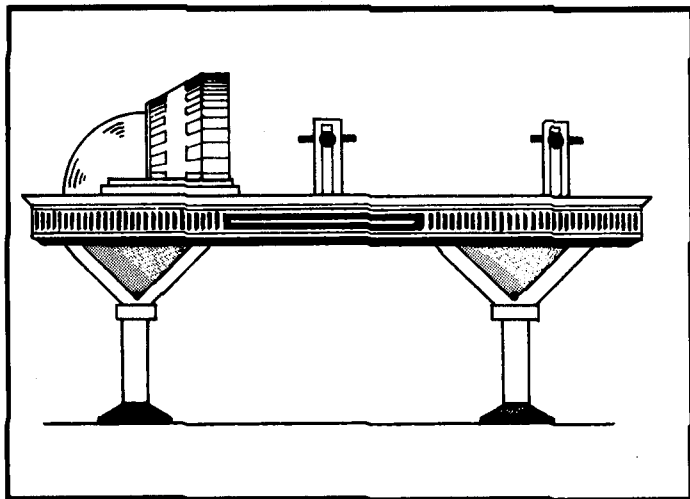
Deathsibyl

(§) A relic of God Maker experimentation in nano-technology, the *Deathsibyl is a machine that can take apart the brain of a living being,* or someone who died within the last few minutes.

A Deathsibyl resembles a typical medical diagnostic bed. The subject is placed inside, and the machine begins to peel the subject's brain, cell by cell, carefully noting the electrical activity within each brain cell. The scanning process takes about an hour. At the end of *this period, the subject's brain is destroyed, but all his memories are* coded into the Deathsibyl's built-in computer.

In essence, the Deathsibyl now contains a computer program that duplicates the memory and personality of a living being. As it is a *program, it can be copied, stored, or erased, and if run on any* Mk.100+ computer, it will believe itself to be alive (at least until contradicted by the lack of any sensation), and can be communicated with. *Artifact*

Dreamreader

(‡) *The Dreamreader is still in use by the M'sia today, and is a* favorite tool of both psychologists and artists. It consists of a suitcase-sized module, and one or more headbands. One is worn by a sleeper, and the other(s) by the monitors, who remain awake.

When the Dreamreader is activated, any dreams the sleeper has will also be experienced by the monitors. Since dreams can often *reveal hidden desires, fears or traumas, "dream-riding" is a useful* psychological tool. A successful session should be worth a +20 bonus to any Psychology roll to figure out what is wrong with someone's mind. In some cases, a Dreamreader may also be useful for interrogation: what a prisoner doesn't spill, he may still dream about — but a successful Psychology roll should be required to interpret the dreams into something useful.

There are some hazards to using a Dreamreader. Because the monitors are awake and aware, they may experience the dreams more vividly then the sleeper, and the effects of this are unpredictable. If the sleeper is a particularly vivid dreamer, the monitors may be trapped within his dream and suffer disorientation, shock or madness before they can escape.

For game purposes, we will define a "vivid dreamer" as anyone with a Presence of 75+. The percentage chance of a vivid dreamer affecting the monitor is equal to the subject's Presence bonus, and this chance is *doubled* if the GM decides the dreamer is currently suffering from terrible nightmares or the like. On the other hand, monitors who have a Presence bonus of their own may *subtract* it from the chance of being affected.

Example: *Calindy Thorn has been suffering from terrible nightmares, and so a M'sia psychologist, Dr. Sign, has been called in to study her dreams. Calindy has a Presence of 98, giving her a +20 bonus, so she counts as a "vivid dreamer." Since she has been having horrible nightmares, the GM doubles this to 40. Furthermore, Dr. Sign, the monitor, has only a Presence of 22 (he's a modest alien), and so actually has a negative Presence bonus of -5, which is added (because it's negative) to the chance. Her dream will influence Dr. Sign on a roll of 45 or less.*

If a person is affected by the dreamer, the GM will have to judge what actually happens. For an NPC, the GM may rule that they wake up screaming, go insane, or die of a heart attack. If it's a PC who is affected, the GM may wish to create some form of "dream adventure." This should be run just like a regular scenario, but make it a weird nightmarish fantasy in which strange things happen as the monitors confront the manifestations of whatever traumas lurk in the dreamer's unconscious mind. And if they are killed, and suffer a "dream death" their characters may wake up to madness, or not wake up at all. *Potent*

Example: *Calindy rolls a 39: Dr. Sign is engulfed in her nightmare! Dr. Sign is a PC, and so the GM decides to run the events as an adventure. The GM knows that Calindy's current nightmares were caused by repressed memories from her childhood. When she was a little girl, her ship was attacked by space pirates and her parents were killed before her eyes. Sign finds himself plunged into a child's eye view of the experience: he is aboard a merchant spaceship with Calindy and the other passengers when the boarding takes place. The pirates are giant, hulking monsters whose weapons spit terrible death; the other passengers are faceless, except for Calindy's parents. Calindy herself is a frightened child. Dr. Sign's only chance of escaping the nightmare with his mind and body intact is to somehow defeat the pirate-monsters, using only the resources available in Calindy's dream. And if he can succeed in persuading the terrified Calindy-in-the-dream to help him confront her own inner demons, she may get over her nightmares too!*

Screamer

(*) The peaceful M'sia have little truck with weapons that produce lethal force, but their traders and missionaries have evolved some alternatives to the stunner for self defense. One of them is the screamer, a completely non-lethal area weapon system. Although invented in God Maker times, it is still in use today.

The screamer is a hand grenade-sized sonic generator. When activated, it projects a terrible undulating howl, rising and falling just above and below the audible threshold, at frequencies calculated to induce terror in most humanoid races.

The screamer affects a 50 meter radius, and a roll is required each turn the character is in the area of effect. To resist a screamer, roll over 100 on 1-100 (open ended). Add any Self Discipline bonus, with a further bonus of +1 per meter away from it. Characters with earplugs or sealed helmets may add +50; races who cannot hear at all are immune, while those with more sensitive hearing should have a penalty to RR.

Anyone failing to successfully resist may not take action that round except to run away, or remain motionless, clutching their ears; animals will usually stampede. Anyone making a resistance roll may act, but unless they rolled 120 or more, they will have a -10 penalty on all rolls that round.

These weapons are sonic in operation: since sound is carried by air, in vacuum they have no effect, and in thin atmospheres their effect radius is halved. In water or denser than normal atmospheres sound travels better, and the effect radius is doubled.

Screamers may be thrown or fired from grenade launchers; their power cells last for three full rounds, then burn out. *Potent*

Translator Module

(*) One M'sia gadget now used by almost every race is the electronic translator. A pocketbook-sized device, this gadget translates back and forth between any two spoken languages. The translator works best in simple one-on-one conversations. Several people speaking at once can confuse it. It includes a directional microphone that can be focused on a specific speaker (range is 50 meters), enabling the computer to make sense out of a multi-party conversation.

A translation module uses program chips. Each chip holds two languages (e.g., Detran-Standard would translate between Detran and Standard). The module can only hold one chip at once; replacing a chip takes one round. New chips cost ≈100 Elmonits each.

Translation modules can be programmed to handle ultrasonic or subsonic languages, musical speech, etc., but they are of limited use for races that lack a spoken language altogether. If this is the case, specialized translation systems must be used. See the description of the Sheol and Spyders for examples. *Potent*
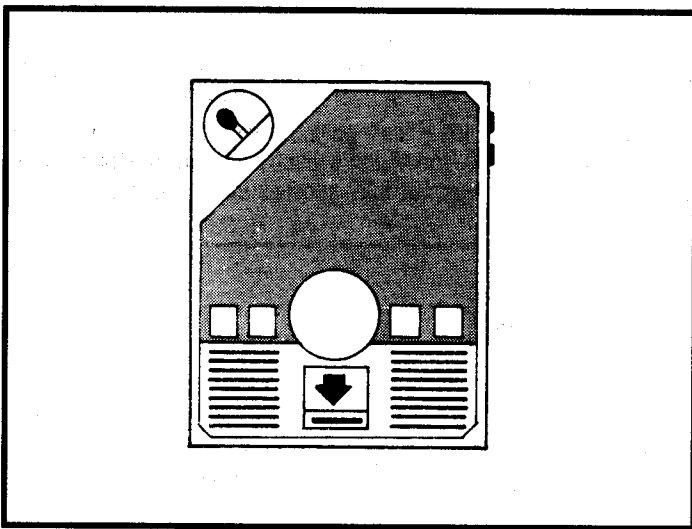
Truthscanner

(*) M'sia technicians invented this device to study behavior patterns, but it has also proven useful as a lie detector, and as such has been marketed and sold to several different human law enforcement firms. Although designed for use with human and M'sia physiology, it can be easily reprogrammed to deal with the metabolic rates and behavior/stress patterns of other races.

The Truthscanner is a portable lie detector with a difference. Traditional lie detection systems suffer from a common disadvantage: the subject is aware that he is being tested, and may then attempt to fool the detector, or nervousness caused by being monitored may give false readings. The Truthscanner avoids this problem by using lifescanner technology to monitor the subject's physiological state (heart beat, voice stress, perspiration, brain waves, etc.) continuously *from a distance.* As a result, the subject may not even be aware that he is being scanned, reducing the margin of error.

A Truthscanner has a range of 25 meters, and is palm-sized. It can be concealed in normal clothing or disguised as another device. *Potent*

Weather Manipulator

(4§) This piece of equipment dates back to God Maker times, where it was often used to create "divine miracles" to impress the natives. Often disguised within a temple or religious relic such as a huge statue, it takes up 1 cubic meter and weighs 1,000 kg. It must be attached to a Mk.50 computer to operate.

A Weather Manipulator is designed to influence weather patterns over a large planetary area. It can tap the planet's geomagnetic field for power and then uses this power to create electrostatic and gravitic fields that can charge and then magnetically move air masses, create winds, and summon up electrical storms. Temperature may only be altered in a minor way by calling up clouds to block sunlight, for instance. Snow in midsummer is impossible, as is rain in a desert. See the *Weather Rules* in the *GM Book* for more guidelines.

The operator of a Weather Manipulator must make Planetology skill rolls to use it properly. A partially failed roll means the weather doesn't change, while total failure indicates an undesirable change that may affect the user. The user can influence weather in a 20 kilometer radius around the device.

Controlling precipitation involves electrostatically manipulating clouds. Each minute that the user makes a successful Medium skill roll, he gets a roll on the *Precipitation Table* on p. 12 of the *GM Book* to see if precipitation has occurred (or stopped). If he is trying to create precipitation, use the table's percentages to represent the chance that a successful roll results in precipitation. Therefore, if trying to create rain on a Temperate planet during the first month of the year, there would be a 15% chance that a successful skill roll would result in rain. If trying to stop existing precipitation, the chance is (100 minus the listed percentage).

If an electrical storm is presently raging overhead, the Weather Manipulator can be used to call down lightning bolts from the sky at any target within 5 kilometers of it. Use the operator's Planetology skill bonus as his OB, with the Lightning counting as a Mk. 5 Blaster attack with a +25 bonus, delivering Electricity instead of Heat criticals. Ignore range modifiers: the Weather Manipulator can strike any target within its area of effect with equal ease.

To control wind strength, refer to the *Wind and Weather table* on p. 11 of the *GM Book*. A change of one column (e.g., moderate gale to fresh gale) over a 6 round (one minute) period is Medium. Increase difficulty to Extremely Hard for a two-step change. In deserts or snowy regions, high winds can create sand storms or ice storms, while in most other climates the user can also create an electrical storm — in either case, this requires an Extremely Hard roll, with failure indicating the storm turns against the user, possibly even damaging the machine. Dispelling an existing storm is also possible: use the same procedure. *Most Potent*

Wizardwand

(2*) This is a small, wand-shaped holographic projector that is often used by M'sia academics while lecturing, although humans have found other uses for it! It takes standard Memory Disks (see *Tech Book*, p. 21). It cannot project images on its own, but if its modulated laser beam is aimed at a hololens (see below) it will trigger it, causing the lens to project whatever is in the memory disk. Controls on the Wizardwand enable the user to control the hololens, turning it off, fast forwarding, etc. With several prepositioned and strategically placed hololenses, wizardwand users can create complex and realistic sound and light shows. *Modest*

Hololens

Used with the Wizardwand, this is a 2.5 cm wide x 1 cm thick lens-shaped device that can be easily concealed; it comes with adhesive backing. When struck by the beam of a Wizardwand (see above) playing a Memory Disk, it will project a holographic image of whatever is on the disk directly above or around it. It has no power cell: the laser beam from the Wizardwand carries the power as well as the image. *Modest*

SHAI-EN-RIN ARTIFACTS

Shai-en-Rin technology is incredibly advanced, far more so then any living race. Much of it is based on the arcane field of science sometimes called *strange physics* which deals with hyperspace, probability and tachyonic effects.

The only race that has matched or exceeded the achievements of the Shai-en-Rin are the mysterious Sianetic Harbingers. GMs may also use Shai-en-Rin devices as Sianetic Harbinger artifacts.

Genetic Virus

This is a virus capable of actually rewriting the genetic code of those beings who are infected, resulting in the being undergoing sudden mutation into a new and different form.

A particular genetic virus is designed to produce the same mutation in everyone who is affected. A sufficiently complex genetic virus could be designed to do almost anything. The mutation may be minor (e.g., reversing gender, or changing skin color), major (transforming lungs into gills, or mutating brain chemistry so that everyone regressed to the level of a 2 year old) or radical (turning humans into Drakarans, making house cats fully intelligent, or giving infected beings psionic powers).

Genetic viruses are tailored to affect only a specific race or species of animal or plant. For instance, a virus that affects all the house cats who contact it won't affect humans, trees or dogs.

A genetic virus may be delivered by tab injection, by aerosol spray, from grenades or bombs, or by contact from an "infected" person who has not yet been transformed. The usual precautions against infection (sealed suits) can protect. If a character has been exposed, make a RR vs. level 20 disease. Failure means infection: the virus takes 1-10 minutes to take effect, and then the transformation takes another 1-10 minutes, during which time the character will be stunned, writhing in agony as he mutates into another form. *Artifact*

Continuum Cracker

In a macrocosmic sense, matter is a construct that exists only because the physical laws of this universe permit it. Matter is no more real than a dream, and by altering a few universal constants, it is possible to wake it from its dream: a process referred to as the Hendrix Effect. A weapon using the Hendrix Effect — a "continuum cracker" — can be focused on a specific point in space or on the ground. The roll is modified by the attacker's OB and the range, but not by the DB of the defender. If the net result is 100+, the attack hits dead on target, and the Hendrix Effect is centered at that point. If the attack misses, consult the *Launcher Error Chart* (*Player Book*, p. 60).

Anything in the area hit by a continuum cracker disappears in a purple psychedelic haze of Cherenkov radiation: totally disintegrated! (Kind GMs may allow characters an Absurd difficulty Acrobatics or Adrenal Moves roll to leap out of the way.) Moreover, a hole is torn in normal space/time. The hole is initially 2 meters across, but may grow or shrink.

Each turn, make a normal 1-100 (non-open ended) roll. A roll of 40 or less indicates the hole begins to shrink — halve its size. A roll of 41-60 indicates the hole stays the same. A roll of 61 or more indicates the hole doubles in size, and anything caught by its expansion is utterly destroyed.

There are two sizes of Hendrix Effect weapons available:

Pocket Continuum Cracker: (†) A pistol-sized weapon often carried by Shai-en-Rin androids. It fires once per round. Power is supplied by a Shai-en-Rin power cell (much more powerful than normal cells).
Type: 1H Energy. **F** 5, **PB** 3 (+15), **SR** 20 (0), **MR** 50 (-30), **LR** 100 (-90).

Heavy Continuum Cracker: (§) A heavy weapon sometimes mounted on Shai-en-Rin combat drones instead of a grenade launcher. It fires once per round.
Type: Sup Energy. **F** 5, **PB** 5 (+15), **SR** 100 (0), **MR** 500 (-30), **LR** 2000 (-90).

At the GM's discretion, larger weapons may be mounted on spacecraft, capable of tearing much bigger holes open in the fabric of normal space/time. Of course, closing them again may not be so easy! *Artifact*
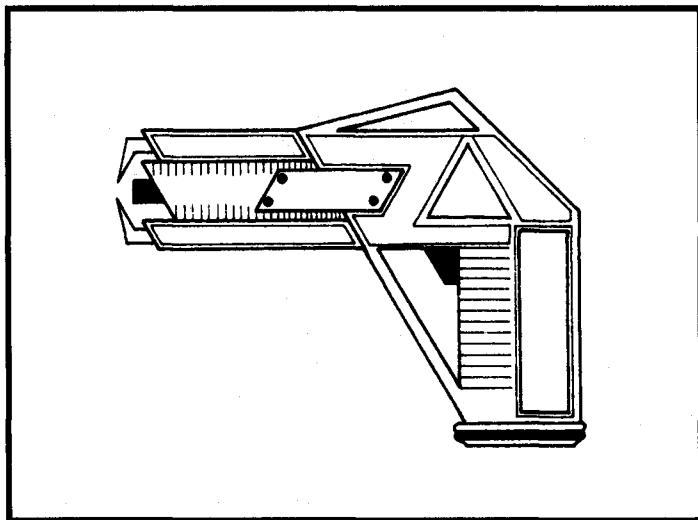
Entropic Neutralizer

An entropic neutralizer creates a field around it that severely slows down the passage of time within the area of effect. An object inside an entropic neutralizer is effectively beyond normal space-time and cannot be affected by anything outside the field.

When an entropic generator is activated, an internal timer (adjusted for the time differential) is set so that the generator will turn itself off when that period of time has passed.

Entropic Neutralizers are large bulky devices that are typically mounted on Shai-en-Rin starships as a last-ditch defensive measure. Although a ship using an Entropic Neutralizer cannot maneuver (since its slowed down by a factor of a billion or more to one), it retains its normal velocity. One Shai-en-Rin ship used this effect to escape a pursuing Imperial Dreadnought — it headed for a collision course with a star, and at the last moment activated the field, diving through the heart of the sun, setting the timer on the field so that it would turn off when it had reached safety on the other side. By the time the Imperial vessel could maneuver around the star, the Shai-en-Rin ship was long gone.

The Sianetic Harbingers occasionally encased entire bases within the fields of Entropic Neutralizers. A few of these installations have been discovered. From the outside, such bases resemble silvery blue mirrors, crawling with weird energy fields. The bases are completely impenetrable to any technology known to the Imperium, but anything or anyone inside them will be perfectly preserved whenever they open, though when that will happen, no one knows! *Artifact*

Negafield Projector

(§) A Negafield prevents electrical systems from operating in the target area. No device requiring electrical power or power cells (of any type) will function within its area of effect. Robots and androids are affected too.

The usual form of this device looks somewhat like a portable radar dish on a tripod mount. It can be folded up into a compact package, and takes two rounds to set up for use. It may also be mounted instead of a grenade launcher on a Shai-en-Rin probe. It will affect a spherical area from 5 to 500 meters across. It has a maximum range of 5,000 meters and a minimum range equal to the current radius of effect (since if the effect exceeded the range, the Negafield would stop working as it drained its own power!)

A Negafield Projector requires no special skill to use and always hits, since it affects such a large area. Just set the controls for the desired area of effect and range, which takes one round. It operates continuously once turned on, requiring no further attention from the user unless its area of focus is to be changed.

Larger generators may be mounted inside Shai-en-Rin ships. They have a range of only 100 kilometers (making them of limited utility in space actions) but can affect a 100 meter to 10 kilometer radius.

Shai-en-Rin are careful when using Negafields, since they are robots or androids themselves — if a Shai-en-Rin ship or android entered a Negafield, it would stop working. However, they have been known to aim a Negafield at a ship, city, or building to suppress the technological devices of defenders, then release genetically mutated creatures. Note that while firearms will not be affected by a Negafield as such, many modern missile launchers, grenades, and so on use electrically activated detonators, which would obviously fail to work in a Negafield. *Artifact*
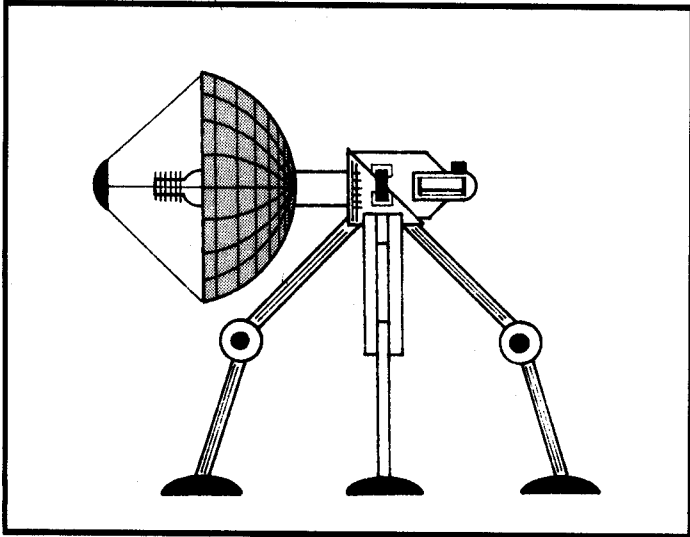
Puppetmaster Implant

A Puppetmaster Implant is a tiny Mk.5 mini-computer that is surgically implanted in a living person. It links with the subject's nervous system, effectively transforming him into a biological robot. The character's body is no longer controlled by his own brain, instead responding to the programs in the implant.

A Puppetmaster can control the subject's body, but not his mind. The computer may not use any of the subject's skills, and its personality, knowledge, and skills are limited to the "robot programs" that it can run in its own computer brain. Since Mk.5 computers are not especially intelligent, the actual computer will not have much in

the way of a "mind," though if designed to interact with humans it may have some language programming, enabling it to talk in a slurred fashion. However, skills such as basic Electronics Technics are well within the implant's capabilities, making it possible to use Puppetmasters to turn anyone (even a child or an unskilled primitive) into an effective technician.

Some Puppetmaster implants are operated by remote control: the internal computer is overridden by an outside signal from a more powerful external computer. When operated by a sufficiently powerful AI computer like the "brain" of a Shai-en-Rin ship, the puppet may be more "intelligent" than it was while under its own volition! But since remote controlled implants can be jammed or even taken over by EW systems, the Shai-en-Rin are unlikely to use them except aboard their own vessels.

Shai-en-Rin have been known to use humans or aliens fitted with Puppetmaster implants as "living robots" for a variety of purposes, from maintenance to combat. Sometimes the controlling computers treat their "puppets" well, but other times they work people until they die of exhaustion or thirst. Since a person controlled by a Puppetmaster implant is fully aware of what is happening to him, this is not especially pleasant.

A Puppetmaster implant can be surgically removed (difficulty is Medium) without damage to the subject.

Unlike other Shai-en-Rin devices, the Puppetmaster implant could (with difficulty) be duplicated by human technology. It is quite possible that the Imperial Intelligence Directorate (or other shady agencies) possess devices of this nature. *Most Potent*

Singularity Seed

Also known as a *star trigger*, this device is a spherical container 6 meters in diameter, which shimmers with the glow of a *entropic neutralizer field*. The inside of the sphere contains a very small black hole (2 centimeters in diameter and one Earth mass). While the entropic neutralizer field is on, the black hole can be manipulated safely.

A Singularity Seed is used in the following manner: *two* Singularity Seeds are launched so that they will orbit into a sun. Their entropic neutralizer fields are programmed to collapse as soon as the Seeds reach the core of the target star.

When they collide, the two black holes will produce a powerful energy flash — about a third of their mass is converted into energy, producing a storm of radiation, particles, antiparticles, and gravity waves. This explosion will usually destabilize the star, resulting in an immediate nova, or at best, massive solar flares.

A Singularity Seed can also be dropped on a planet — two seeds make a quite effective planet buster (imagine converting two thirds of an entire planet's mass into energy) while a single seed will simply orbit within the planet, rapidly devouring it. *Artifact*

Stasis Globe

(§) When this device is activated, a temporal bubble is created. A time bubble is a warp in the fabric of space/time. The bubble is 5 meters in diameter, and persists as long as the device is turned on. From the perspective of those within the bubble, everything outside it is frozen in time. Characters inside the bubble can move and act normally, but nothing — no object, force or energy, physical or mental — can leave the interior of a time bubble until the machine is deactivated or destroyed. Generating a time bubble requires enormous energy: a fusion pack will be exhausted within 1/2 hour of subjective time, though of course, no time will have passed in the outside world.

A Stasis Globe can produce interesting effects. For example, suppose a damaged Shai-en-Rin android was facing two opponents, one twenty meters away, the other next to it. The android activates the Stasis Globe, catching one of its enemies and itself in it. The other individual is then "frozen in time" giving the Shai-en-Rin android time to fight the first enemy without outside interference. Suppose the android won the fight, and then took a few minutes to repair itself before turning off the globe. From the perspective of the character outside the time bubble, his friend is *suddenly dead* and the android has instantly repaired all its injuries! Such a feat would seem like magic to an outside observer! *Artifact*

Teleplat

A teleplat is a teleport platform, about 2 meters across. It is usually a small disk-shaped platform mounted in a spaceship. The actual teleportation machinery takes up a small room, and weighs about 2 tons. A teleplat requires a space ship or vehicle-sized antimatter or fusion reactor to power it.

A teleplat can only teleport individuals to other Teleplats; this is the device's main limitation. The destination Teleplat must be turned on and within range, and the sending Teleplat must have exact coordinates of the receiving station programmed into it. If these conditions are met, a typical teleplat can transport up to four people or 8 cumets of cargo at a time. A teleplat takes 10 minutes to "recharge" after being used.

Shai-en-Rin teleplats usually have a range of about 80,000,000 kilometers. They are generally used to transport machinery, spare parts, or "guests" between ships. Some Teleplats used by the Sianetic Harbingers were used for local transport, to replace subways or elevators in Harbinger cities or bases. Others had even greater ranges: a teleplat found in the ancient site on Mandrake III sent an unwary archaeologist to a second teleplat hidden in an undiscovered Sianetic Harbinger base on Ganesha IX, a distance of 20 light years. There is a rumor that Imperial archaeologists once discovered a Teleplat with *interdimensional* capability. Unfortunately, the utility of Teleplat artifacts is very dependent on the user having access to the location of another working Teleplat as a destination point.

Shai-en-Rin teleplats are operated by the sophisticated Artificial Intelligence computers that control the Shai-en-Rin vessel, but if humans ever capture one, they may be able to get it working by linking it to one of their computers (Mk.100+) and writing a special program to control it. Teleplats designed for Sianetic Harbinger use are manually controlled, but their controls are sometimes difficult to understand. Either way, anyone operating a Teleplat must make a Tachyon Physics skill roll (difficulty levels are *Hard* to just operate it, and *Extremely Hard* to reprogram the coordinates and then operate). Roll *after* someone steps through the system! A success means the Teleplat sends the character through to the destination Teleplat. *Artifact*

For failures, consult the following chart:

TELEPLAT FAILURE CHART

Failure By — Effect

01-10 — It works, but both systems burn out after use, possibly stranding users. Repairs require an Electronics Engineering roll (difficulty: Absurd), hard-to-find spare parts, and at least 10 days.

11-20 — Both portals burn out as above; weird radiation effects inflict "C" radiation criticals on everyone within 5 meters of either platform ("B" if wearing AT 17+ armor or any deflector, absorption or barrier shield).

21-50 — Teleplat transit has a distorting effect on matter, and anything sent through takes 40 + 1-100 hits. Anyone killed is turned inside out!

51+ — Teleplat burns out; everything within 10 meters of both platforms are sucked into hyperspace and are destroyed.

SHEOL ARTIFACTS

Squid Mothers make living tools for use by Sheol Messengers. They are given orders via sonar pulses, and can only survive in a gas giant environment. However, genetic data supplied by Terran scientists may enable the Sheol to develop versions capable of being controlled by humans, and surviving in oxygen environments.

Biolaser

This is a Sheol Messenger whose body has been converted into a living gas-dynamic laser. The Biolaser has a tubular body 5 meters long, buoyed up by hydrogen sacs to enable it to float, and walks on four 1 meter long tentacle "legs." It uses its natural sonar as a targeting system. It is not intelligent, but can receive orders from other Sheol to the extent of "aim" and "fire."

As a weapon system, the Biolaser can fire itself exactly like a standard heavy laser. All Biolasers have a skill bonus of +20 in Energy Projector and in Ambush. That's all they can do. They have 45 hits, AT 4 skin, and DB 10. *Potent*
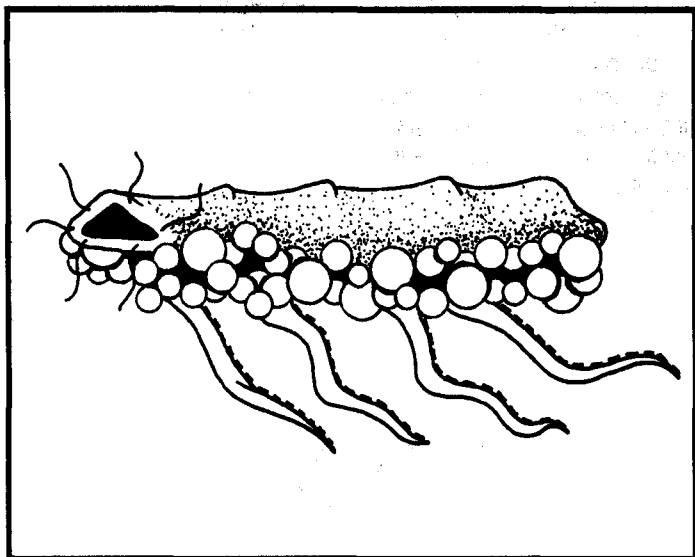
Medical Drone

This Sheol bio-construct is a rat-sized multi-legged creature vaguely resembling a cross between a spider and a centipede, its abdomen glowing with a faint blue light. It can diagnose and treat casualties with great skill, but cannot communicate, and has no more intelligence than a rodent.

It has natural sonar and infravision enabling it to perform biological sonagrams and check temperatures without equipment. By taking a small nip out of the patient, its sensitive taste buds can detect the presence of drugs or other chemicals. It can manufacture any three standard medical drugs in its body (usually Sheol equivalents of Andeline, Stirine, and Hemoflux (see *Tech Book*, pages 18-19), and can inject them with its own stinger, although it is limited to four doses each.

If first aid is necessary, the creature will crawl up onto the patient and use its tiny jaws to cut away damaged tissue and remove bone fragments or foreign material, with a skill bonus of +50. It spins a web-like anesthetic thread that can suture cuts, healing bleeding wounds (max 5 hits/round in severity) at a rate of 1/round, while its saliva acts as a blood-clotting agent. It can also rejoin severed veins and arteries on a successful maneuver roll. If a cast must be created, it can weave, caterpillar fashion, a dense, cushioning cocoon around the affected area, effectively immobilizing it in much the same manner as an Instasplint (*Tech Book*, p. 18) for up to 24 hours. Finally, its body is also capable of delivering and storing a powerful electric shock, which can be used for cardiac stimulation.

A Medical Drone requires regular feeding, sipping a pre-digested nutrient paste (similar to baby food) once per day. It has a life span of 2 years. *Potent*

Toxic Spraything

The "toxic spraything" (an idiomatic translation) is a small creature looking somewhat like an eyeless purple snake with a head like the petals of a flower. Incapable of movement on its own, it is actually closer to a plant than an animal. It is carried like a flamethrower; when squeezed it can spray a cloud of deadly corrosive spores.

The weapon has the following statistics:

Type: 2 Tentacle Sprayer **Rate:** 1/rnd, **F** 2, **PB** 1 (+15), **SR** 2 (0), **MR** 3 (-30), **LR** 5 (-90) and 5 Shots (each takes one hour per shot to reload itself)

Any modified roll of 60+ indicates the subject was hit, covering him with toxic spores which immediately begin to eat through his armor. The spores inflict (17 - target AT) hits per turn. Therefore, a character in AT 17+ armor is immune, but anyone else will take damage. The spores can survive for up to a minute. Multiple hits on the same character have no extra effect, other than increasing duration. *Potent*
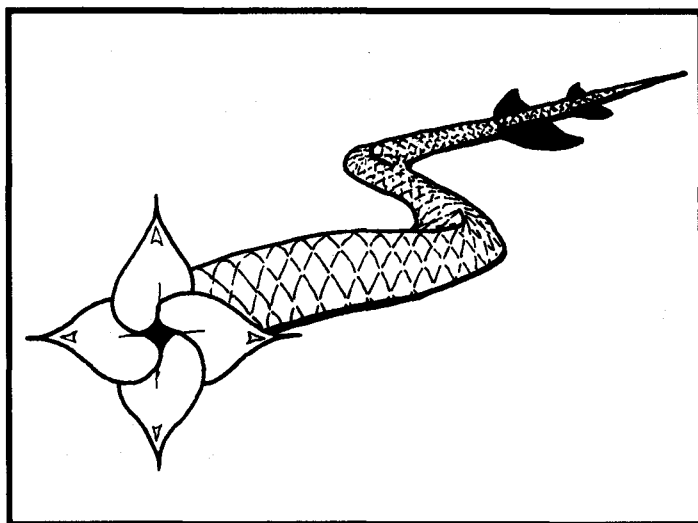
SPYDER ARTIFACTS

The major influence Spyders have had on the galaxy is in their attitudes toward dress and fashion. Most Spyder devices can find a ready market on human worlds, although not always for the same purposes as the Spyders designed them for.

Cleaning Spray

This somewhat innocuously named device is used to clean up annoying organic substances — for example, recently eaten rodents, insect hives, stopped up water closets, inconvenient corpses, or the like. A small (insect repellent-sized) can of Cleaning Spray can cover a 1 meter x 2 meter x 1 meter area, with a range of 4 meters. A can is good for three rounds of spraying.

Cleaning spray is in fact an exceptionally powerful tailored micro-organism that only affects certain organic materials, especially living or dead flesh, blood and bone, consuming it utterly in a matter of seconds. Cleaning spray is highly selective, and will only affect animal protein and waste, leaving things such as wooden floors intact. The microorganism is engineered with a short life span and can only reproduce a certain number of times, resulting in it the sprayed area becoming inert after one minute.

Unscrupulous individuals will note that Cleaning Spray does not distinguish between living and dead organisms. To use it in combat, roll to hit, treating it as a Mini-Flamer for range and OB modifiers, with the ability to fire one spray per round. Anyone hit who is not wearing a fully sealed suit will take 2-20 hits each round for the next 6 rounds and will be at a cumulative -10 each round due to the pain of his skin, etc. being eaten away. Characters may develop weapon skills in "sprays" to gain skill in this or similar devices (e.g., Mace, Toxic Spraythings, etc.). *Modest*

Fabricator

(‡) A feature of every Spyder starship and home, and widely copied on some human worlds, this device automatically produces clothes, masks or scarves of different cuts, weights, patterns and colors. To operate it, the user steps into a booth in the machine, and the booth's laser scans the character, taking his or her measurements. The user then dials up different suits of clothing, and a holographic projector creates the images of the clothes appearing around the characters body! The user can make simple changes of color, style or whatever just by punching in the appropriate code (human versions are voice controlled).

After the user comes to a decision, the machine will instantly begin fabricating the outfit requested from its stocks of materials. Tailoring can take as little as 15 minutes. Cost of raw fabric will be around ten percent of a normal suit of clothing. Although the fabricator is limited to making garments from the kind of materials it has in storage, it can also wash, clean, fit, modify old clothes, or even recycle them into completely new outfits. *Modest*

Fashion Cloak

Worn by wealthy Spyders as a last resort in the case of irreparable damage to one's wardrobe, this is a belt-mounted high power holographic generator that can project a glowing image of "clothing" around the wearer. The device incorporates an expensive and highly sophisticated scanning system designed to match the holograph of clothing to the wearer's movements. This works as long as the user moves in a sedate and relatively predictable pattern, but in (for instance) combat, the user's clothing has a distressing tendency to flicker, blur, or even vanish. A fashion cloak uses special Fashion Disks (similar to standard Memory Disks, *Tech Book*, p. 21), each of which incorporates the patterns for ten different garments. *Modest*

Maser Weapons

Masers are coherent microwave beams; on Terra they were a precursor to the laser, and were used in communications and direct power transmission. As with laser beams, a sufficiently powerful coherent microwave burst can be dangerous, and it this principle that is employed in maser weaponry.

Maser weapons are invisible and silent. Their coherent microwave beams literally cook their targets from the inside out, leaving no wounds, but causing nausea, loss of coordination, and dizziness. A strong burst can cause the target's blood to boil or result in ruptures of internal organs.

Treat Masers as Lasers (with all standard types, ranges, etc.), but instead of Heat criticals they will deliver Radiation criticals. A sufficiently powerful maser beam can cause organs to explode (similar to a Disruptor): in cases where Puncture criticals would normally be inflicted by a laser (on F, G, and H criticals), inflict Internal Disruption criticals instead!

Masers are the favorite armament of Spyder assassins, matching all their necessary criteria set forth by the textbooks of their race's master assassins: they are silent, clean weapons that produce slow, lingering deaths. *Modest*
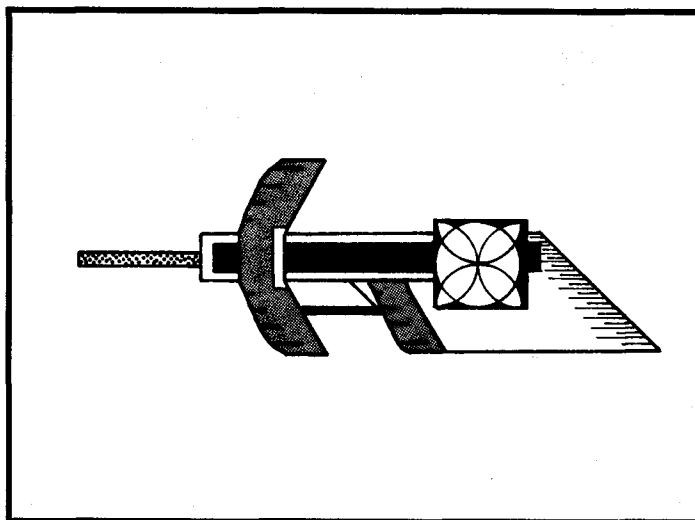
Rainbow Suit

Powered by body heat, this jumpsuit (with folding hood) is woven of electrically active fabric that can change color at the touch of a button. Essentially, each and every "thread" in the garment is composed of a liquid crystal display that can be individually or collectively programmed to change its pigment. By tinkering with the wrist-mounted graphic controls, the user can "paint" on the suit's surface, creating designs ranging from simple patterns of stripes or spots to complex works of art, although obviously the quality of work depends on the user's artistic skill!

Rainbow Suits are usually made of light-weight, insulated and waterproof fabric (AT 3), and are favorite rain and cold weather gear

of well-off Spyders. However, a Rainbow surface can also be added to an environmental space suit or even to any full body armor suit such as ABS Battle Mesh or ABS Pliable Full Plate.

This is especially useful, not only to the fashion-conscious Spyder preparing for battle, but also because the Rainbow Suit can be easily adjusted to provide a high quality camouflage pattern, giving opponents a -20 penalty to spot the character or adding +20 to Hiding skill. The cost of adding a Rainbow surface to armor is 500 Elmonits in addition to the cost of the suit itself. *Potent*

Spydersilk Clothing

The Spyders can weave a marvelous array of silky fabrics, gossamer thin but wonderfully strong, rivalling the best Imperial shimmershear in quality and beauty. The many varieties of so-called Spydersilk are avidly sought by nobles, corporate executives and wealthy merchants, and demand far outstrips supply. *Modest*

41.0
TEZCAT ARTIFACTS

The Tezcat produce a wide range of lethal military hardware for use by their Worldkillers and Soulhunters. A few examples are given below:

Helltwister Grenade

Helltwister (HT) grenades contain miniature hyperspacial matrix generators designed to be activated in a gravity well, causing catastrophic effects. When detonated in a gravity well, a Helltwister produces a vortex effect that sucks anything and anyone within Ground Zero into hyperspace. Objects larger than the Ground Zero radius are unaffected, and kind GMs may permit characters a level 15 RR to escape this fate, with Quickness (to duck out of the way) or Strength (to hold onto something too large to go through the whirlpool) bonus used instead of Constitution.

If the grenade goes off in atmosphere (either on a world or in a ship), the effects are worse due to the sudden rush of air into the vortex. Resolve the effects on the *Grenade Attack Table* (see *Tech Book*), delivering Vacuum criticals.

If a Helltwister grenade is activated in zero or micro gravity (under 0.1 G) the only effect is that the grenade (nothing else) vanishes into hyperspace. *Most Potent*

Helltwister grenades range in size from Mk.1 to MK.5. They come in hand-thrown, launched, RPG and missile versions. There are three variations of the grenade:

1) Point Defense Helltwister (PDHT) grenades have warheads with restricted burst radius to allow their use at close quarters, or for pin-point attacks. Each blast radius extends outward from the detonated grenade only one (1) meter per Mk.#.

2) Helltwister (HT) grenades form the basis of this series, having standard blast radii. Each blast radius extends outward from the detonated grenade two (2) meters per Mk.#.

3) Enhanced Helltwister (EHT) grenades have abnormally large blast radii. Each blast radius extends from the detonated grenade to a distance of three (3) meters per Mk.#. In addition, any Vacuum criticals are rolled twice with both results applied to the target.

Powered Armor Exoskeletons (PAX)

Used by the Tezcat Worldkillers, these are form-fitting powered armor exoskeletons that are much lighter and less bulky than the powered armor described in *Armored Assault*. In fact, Tezcat PAX is quite form-fitting, and resembles conventional armored exoskeletons

more closely than it does heavier powered armor. The suits outer casing is made of a composite of foamed face-hardened duraloy, exotic ceramic plates, and molecular aligned crystaline steel, which gives them a minimum AT 20, usually with an additional DB. Although individual models differ, all PAX suits have certain attributes in common:

1) The myoelectric muscles of the suit double personal strength. This increases lifting capacity, and doubles the number of concussion hits inflicted in melee or martial arts attacks.

2) Double ground movement rate and leaping distance as the suits can carry their operators in great bounding strides. Treat the suit as Armored Exoskeletons for Maneuvering in Armor skill.

3) They provide full life support for up to 20 hours in all conditions, including hard vacuum. The suit is fully environmental, with air conditioning, waste disposal, food and water systems. A built-in filtered compressor allows unlimited operation (as long as the suit's power lasts) in standard thin or contaminated atmospheres.

4) They all include built-in communicators in the suit helmet, an ultraview faceplate with infrared and light filter lenses, a built-in optical/laser range finder that adds +10 to the wearer's OB when using any suit weapon, and a computer map (see *Tech Book*, p. 13) that projects directly onto the suit faceplate.

5) All suits include a Reflective Armor Layer adding 10 vs. laser fire and visible light-based attacks.

6) All suit systems run off an internal microfusion reactors.

RavagerPax: (§) The favorite battle suit of Tezcat Worldkiller invasion forces, the Ravager is designed for combat against infantry forces, though if the user carries a PML he can be quite effective against enemy armored vehicles as well, especially since his enhanced strength allows him to carry several missile reloads.

In addition to the basic systems described above, this powersuit mounts a Plasmatic Repeater Rifle in the left arm and a Power Sword blade that springs out of the right hand. Because of the suit's internal targeting systems, there is no penalty for "off-hand" use of its weapons as long as only one weapon system is used per turn.

A Tactical Scanner (*Tech Book*, p. 16) is built into the helmet; readings are displayed holographically on the wearer's faceplate. The faceplate also functions as a Cyberlink (see *Evantha Technology*).

The Ravager has gravitic generators that reduce its apparent weight and enable it to hover at up to 80 meters off the ground. Plasma jets feeding from the suit's reactor provide lateral thrust, enabling it to fly at 400 meters per round.

The Ravager power suit protects the wearer as AT 20, with an additional +20 Defensive Bonus for superior armor. In addition, the suit has a super-ceramic plate layer increasing its DB to 30 vs. lasers, blasters, flamers, and plasma repeaters. *Most Potent*

Night Stalker PAX: (§) This suit of light-weight powered armor is designed for use by Soulhunter "SWAT" teams, and has also been adopted by Tezcat Worldkiller commando units. As such, it is amply provided with stealth and detection systems.

In addition to the basic systems common to all PAX suits, a voice controlled Multiscanner (*Tech Book*, p. 14) is built into the helmet; readings are displayed holographically on the user's faceplate, which also functions as a Cyberlink (see *Evanthan Technology* for stats).

The Night Stalker is specially designed to evade detection. To ensure that it does so, a Personal EW Generator (*Tech Book*, p. 14) is built into the suit to prevent detection by scanners. A sensor-linked phototropic layer covers the suit's surface, designed to analyze the surrounding environment and change color to match it. This "chame-leon" effect can be disconcerting to observers at close range, but provides the wearer with a +25 bonus to Stalking and +50 when Hiding. The wearer can also adjust the suit so that its surface turns reflective, losing all stealth bonuses but adding +20 to DB against laser fire and providing protection against extreme temperatures by reflecting away excess heat.

Night Stalker powersuits are capable of flight, with gravitic genera-tors built into them to reduce its apparent weight and enable them to hover at up to 100 meters off the ground. Plasma jets feeding from the suit's reactor provide lateral thrust, enabling it to fly at 500 meters per turn.

Where the Nightstalker is inferior to the Ravager is in its internal armament, which is limited to a Struptor Rifle built into the right forearm. Of course, the wearer of the suit can also carry whatever other weapons he likes.

The Night Stalker PAX protects the wearer with AT 20, with an additional +10 DB "superior armor" bonus. *Most Potent*

42.0 ALIEN EQUIPMENT TABLE

Item	Mass (kg)	Cost (EI)	Item	Mass (kg)	Cost (EI)
Drakaran Equipment			*M'sia Equipment*		
Gravity Net	200	9,500	Deathsibyl	20	Artifact
Infinity Glove	1	1,200	Dreamreader	4	3,200
Mini Neutron Blaster	0.25	250	Screamer	0.1	15
Neutron Blaster Pistol	1	750	Translator Module	1	600
Assault Neutron Blaster	4	1,000	Truthscanner	0.5	500
Neutron Blaster Rifle	6	1,200	Weather Manipulator	200	20,000
Heavy Neutron Blaster	9	1,800	Wizardwand	0.2	100
Tactical Nuclear Disruptor	40	15,000	Hololens	0.1	20
Strategic Nuclear Disruptor	10,000	200,000	*Shai-en-Rin Equipment*		
Evantha Equipment			Genetic Virus	0.1/Mk.#	Artifact
Cyberlink	0.2	500	Pocket Continuum Cracker	1	Artifact
Laser Sight	0.1	100	Heavy Continuum Cracker	8	Artifact
Televisual Sight	0.2	400	Entropic Neutralizer	1,000	Artifact
Laser Televisual Sight	0.3	500	Negafield Projector	12	Artifact
Heatseeker Ammo (5 rnds)	0.5	15	Puppetmaster	1	2,000
Scramble Grenades	0.1kg/Mk	25/Mk	Singularity Seed	2,000	Artifact
Inheritor Equipment			Stasis Globe	10	Artifact
Deathwand 3	3,000		Teleplat	2,000	Artifact
Multicom	1	75	*Sheol Equipment*		
Organic Nutrient Processor	20	4,800	Biolaser	100	12,000
Inyx Equipment			Medical Drone	6	4,000
AMV Grenade	0.1kg/Mk.#	40/Mk.#	Toxic Spraything	12	2,000
Construction Coral	varies	varies	*Spyder Equipment*		
Eyeblink	0.01	50	Cleaning Spray	1	50
Mind Amplifier	0.1	10,000	Fabricator	300	6,000
Neural Sword	0.5	1,200	Fashion Cloak	1	200
Psiberleach	0.3	500	Maser Weapons	as Lasers	as Lasers
Lithkind Equipment			Rainbow Suit	2	1,000
Flare Grenades	0.1kg/Mk.#	15/Mk.#	Spydersilk Clothing	1-2	1k to 3k
Infinity Sword	1	800	*Tezcat Equipment*		
Magnatronic Key	0.1	100	Helltwister	0.1kg/Mk.#	50/Mk.#
Razorwhip	0.3	400	Ravager PAX	25	5,200
			Night Stalker PAX	22	4,600

The following appendix contains charts which originally appeared in *Claw Law*™.

CLAW LAW

TABLE 1 - BEAK/PINCER ATTACK TABLE

Roll	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Roll
01-02	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	01-02
03-30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	03-30
31-33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31-33
34-36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	34-36
37-39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	37-39
40-42	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40-42
43-45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	43-45
46-48	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	46-48
49-51	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	49-51
52-54	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	52-54
55-57	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	55-57
58-60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	58-60
61-63	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	3AT	61-63
64-66	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	4BT	64-66
67-69	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	2	0	2	3AT	5CT	67-69
70-72	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	1	3AT	0	3	4BT	6DT	70-72
73-75	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	0	0	1	4BT	0	4	5CT	7AS	73-75
76-78	0	0	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	3	5	0	0	2	5CT	1	5	6DT	8AS	76-78
79-81	0	1	2	3	1	2	0	0	0	1	4	6	1	1	3AT	6DT	2	6AT	7AS	9AS	79-81
82-84	1	2	3	4	2	3	5	6AT	1	2	4	7AT	1	2AT	4BT	7AS	5BT	7BT	7AS	10AS	82-84
85-87	1	2	3	6	3	4	6	7BT	2	3	5	8BT	2AT	3BT	5CT	8AS	6CT	7AT	8AS	10AS	85-87
88-90	2	3	4	7AT	4	5	7	7CT	3	4	6	9CT	3BT	4CT	6DT	9AS	6DT	8BT	9AS	11AS	88-90
91-93	2	3	6	8BT	5	5	8AT	8DT	4	5	7AT	9DT	4CT	5DT	7AS	10AS	4AT	8CT	10AS	12BS	91-93
94-96	8AT	8AT	7	8CT	9AK	6AT	8BT	9AS	8AT	6	8BT	10AS	5DT	6AS	8AS	11AS	5BT	9DT	11AS	13BS	94-96
97-99	3	5	8AT	9DT	9AS	6BT	9CT	10AS	8BT	7	8CT	11AS	5AS	7AS	9AK	11AS	6CT	10AS	12BS	14BS	97-99
100-102	15BS	5AT	8BT	10AS	10AS	7CT	9DT	10AS	9DT	5AT	9DT	12AS	5AS	6AS	10AS	12BS	6DT	10AS	13BS	15BS	100-102
103-105	4AT	6BT	11AS	11AS	11AS	8CT	10DT	11AS	10AS	6CT	10AS	13AS	6AK	7AK	11AK	13BS	8AS	11AS	14BS	16BK	103-105

Maximum Results for Small Attacks

Roll	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Roll
106-108	5BT	6CT	12AS	12AS	7DT	8DT	11AS	12AS	5CT	7DT	11AS	13AS	7AS	8AS	12BS	14BS	9AS	12BS	15CS	17CS	106-108
109-111	5CT	7DT	11AK	12AS	8AK	9AK	11AK	13BS	6DT	7AK	11AK	14BS	7AK	9AK	13BK	15BK	10AS	12BS	16CK	18CK	109-111
112-114	6DT	8AS	12AK	13BS	9AS	9AS	12AS	13BS	6AK	8AS	12AS	15BS	8BS	10BS	14CK	16CS	11AS	13BS	17CK	19CS	112-114
115-117	6AK	8AK	11AK	13BS	9AK	10AK	13AK	14BK	7AK	9AK	12AK	16BK	9BK	10BK	15BK	17CK	11AK	14BK	18CK	20DK	115-117
118-120	7AK	9AS	13AS	15BS	10AS	11AS	13BS	15CS	7AK	9AS	13BS	17CS	10BS	11BS	16CS	18CS	12BS	15CS	19DS	20DS	118-120

Maximum Results for Medium Attacks

Roll	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Roll
121-123	7AK	9AK	14BK	15CK	10AK	11AK	14BK	16CK	8AK	10BK	15BK	17CK	11BK	12BK	17CK	19CK	13BK	16CK	20DK	21DK	121-123
124-126	8AK	10BS	14BS	16CS	11BS	12BS	15BS	16CS	9AS	11BS	15CS	18CS	12CS	13CS	18CS	20CS	14BS	17CS	21DS	22DS	124-126
127-129	9AK	10BK	15BK	17CK	11BK	12BK	16CK	17CK	9BK	11BK	16CK	19CK	13CK	14CK	19CK	21DK	15CK	18CK	21DK	23DK	127-129
130-132	9BS	11CK	16CS	17CS	12BS	13BS	16DS	18DS	10BS	12CS	17CS	20DS	14DS	15DS	20DS	22DS	16CS	18DS	22ES	24ES	130-132
133-135	10BK	12CK	17CK	18DK	13CK	14CK	17DK	19DK	11BK	12CK	18DK	21DK	15DK	16DK	21DK	23DK	16CK	19DK	23ES	25EK	133-135

Maximum Results for Large Attacks

Roll	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Roll
136-138	10BS	12CS	17CS	19DS	13CS	14CS	18DS	19DS	11CS	13CS	18DS	21DS	14DS	16DS	22DS	24ES	17DS	20DS	24ES	26ES	136-138
139-141	11CK	13DK	18DK	19DK	14CK	15CK	19DK	20EK	12CK	14DK	19DK	23ES	15DK	17DK	23EK	25EK	18DK	21EK	25EK	27EK	139-141
142-144	11CS	13DS	18DS	20ES	14DS	15DS	19DS	21ES	12DS	14DS	20ES	24ES	16ES	18ES	24ES	26ES	19ES	22ES	26ES	28ES	142-144
145-147	12DK	14DK	19EK	21EK	15DK	16DK	20EK	22EK	13DK	15EK	21EK	24EK	17EK	19EK	25EK	27EK	20EK	23EK	27EK	29EK	145-147
148-150	13ES	15ES	20ES	22FS	16ES	17ES	21ES	23FS	13ES	16ES	22ES	25FS	18ES	20ES	26ES	28FS	21ES	24ES	28FS	30FS	148-150

Maximum Results for Huge Attacks

Note: An F-severity critical result indicates an E-critical roll on the Slash Critical Strike Table and a C-critical roll on the Krush Critical Strike Table.

Note: Animals attempting to hold onto a target (on this table) may be given an additional attack on the Grapple Attack Table if they obtain a critical strike result on this table.

Critical Strikes: P = Puncture, S = Slash, K = Krush, G = Grapple, U = Unbalance, T = Tiny

CLAW LAW

TABLE 2 - BITE ATTACK TABLE

Roll	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
01-02	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
03-30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
31-33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
34-36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
37-39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
40-42	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
43-45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
46-48	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
49-51	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
52-54	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
55-57	3AT	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
58-60	5AT	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
61-63	6BT	4AT	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
64-66	7CT	6BT	0	0	3	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
67-69	9DT	7CT	1	0	5AT	3	1	0	3	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
70-72	10ET	8DT	2	1	6AT	4AT	1	1	5	3	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
73-75	11AS	10ET	3	2	7BT	6AT	2	2	7	5	2	0	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
76-78	13AP	11AP	4	3	9CT	7BT	3	3AT	8	7	3	0	4	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
79-81	14AS	12AS	5AT	4	10DT	8CT	4AT	4BT	9AT	8	4	0	6	3	1	1	3	1	1	0
82-84	15AP	14AP	7BT	5	11ET	9DT	5BT	5CT	10BT	9AT	5AT	0	7AT	5	2	2	4	2	2	0
85-87	17BS	15AS	8CT	6	13AS	11ET	6CT	6DT	11CT	10BT	6BT	0	9AT	6AT	3AT	3AT	5AT	3	3	0
88-90	18BP	16AP	9DT	7AT	14AP	12AS	7DT	7ET	13DT	11CT	7CT	0	10AT	7AT	4AT	4AT	6AT	4	4	0
91-93	19BS	18BS	10ET	8BT	16AS	13AP	8ET	8AP	14ET	13DT	8DT	1	11BT	8BT	5AT	5AT	7BT	5AT	5AT	0
94-96	21BP	19BP	11AP	9CT	17AP	15AS	9AP	9AP	15AP	14ET	9ET	2AT	12CT	9BT	6BT	6BT	8CT	6BT	6AT	1AT
97-99	22BS	20BS	13AS	10DT	18BS	16AP	10AP	10AP	16AS	15AP	10AP	3AT	13DT	10CT	7BT	7CT	9DT	7CT	7BT	2AT
100-102	23BP	22BP	14AP	11ET	20BP	17BS	11AP	11AP	17AP	16AS	11AP	4AT	14ET	11DT	8CT	8DT	10ET	8DT	8CT	3BT
103-105	25BS	23BS	15BS	12AP	21BS	18BP	12AP	13BP	19AS	17AP	12AS	5BT	15AP	13AP	9DT	9ET	11AP	9ET	9DT	4CT
Maximum Results for Small Attacks																				
106-108	26CP	24BP	16BP	14AP	22CP	20BS	14BP	14BP	20AP	19AS	13BP	6CT	17BS	14AS	9ET	9AP	13AS	10AP	9ET	5DT
109-111	27CS	25CS	18BS	15AS	24CS	21BP	16BP	16BP	21BS	20AP	14BP	7DT	18BP	15AP	10AP	10AP	14AP	11AP	10AP	6ET
112-114	29DP	27CP	19BP	16BP	25CP	22CS	17BS	17BS	22BP	21BS	15BS	8ET	19BS	16BS	11AP	11AP	15BS	12BS	11AP	7AP
115-117	30DS	28DS	20CS	17BS	26CS	23CP	18CP	18CP	23CS	22BP	16CP	9AP	20CP	17BP	12AP	11AP	16BP	13AP	12AP	8AP
118-120	31DP	29DP	21CP	18BP	28DP	25CS	19CS	19CS	25CP	23CS	17CS	10AP	21CS	18BS	13BS	12BS	17BS	14BS	13AS	8AP
Maximum Results for Medium Attacks																				
121-123	33DS	31DS	22CS	19CS	29DS	26CP	20CP	20CP	26CS	25CP	18CP	11AP	22CP	19BP	14BP	13BP	18BP	15BP	14BS	9BP
124-126	34EP	32DP	24CP	20CP	31DP	27DS	21CS	21CS	27CP	26CS	19CS	12BP	23CS	20CS	15BS	14BS	20CS	16BS	15BP	10BP
127-129	35ES	33ES	25DS	21CS	32DS	29DP	22CP	22DP	28DS	27CP	20DP	13BP	25DP	21CP	15BP	15BP	21CP	17CP	16BS	10BS
130-132	37EP	35EP	26DP	22DP	33EP	30DS	23DS	23DS	29DP	28DS	21DS	14BS	26DS	22CS	16CS	16CS	22CS	18CS	17CS	11BP
133-135	38ES	36ES	27DS	23DS	35ES	31DP	24DP	24DP	30DS	29DP	22DP	15BP	27DP	23CP	17CP	17CP	23DP	20DP	18CP	11BS
Maximum Results for Large Attacks																				
136-138	39EP	37EP	30ES	24DP	36EP	32ES	25DS	25DS	31DS	31DS	23DS	16CS	28DS	24CS	18CS	18CS	24DS	21CS	19CS	12BS
139-141	41ES	39ES	31EP	25ES	37ES	34EK	26EP	26EP	32DP	32DP	24EP	17CP	30EK	25DP	19CP	19CP	25DP	22DP	20CP	13CP
142-144	42EP	40EP	32EK	26EP	39EP	35EK	27EK	27EK	34EP	34EP	24EK	18CK	32EK	26DK	20DK	20DK	26DK	23DK	21DK	14CK
145-147	43ES	41ES	33ES	27ES	40ES	36ES	28ES	28ES	35ES	35ES	25ES	19DS	32ES	27ES	21DS	21DS	27ES	24ES	22DS	15DS
148-150	45FP	43FP	35EP	29EP	42FP	38EP	29EP	29EP	37FP	37EP	25EP	20EP	33FP	28EP	22EP	22EP	30FP	25EP	23EP	16EP
Maximum Results for Huge Attacks																				

NOTE: An F-severity critical indicates an E-critical roll on the Puncture Critical Strike Table and a C-critical roll on the Slash Critical Strike Table.

NOTE: Animals attempting to hold onto a target (on this table) may be given an additional attack on the Grapple Attack Table if they obtain a critical result on this table.

CRITICAL STRIKES: P = Puncture, S = Slash, K = Krush, G = Grapple, U = Unbalance, T = Tiny

TABLE 3 - CLAW/TALON ATTACK TABLE

CLAW LAW

Roll	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Roll
01-02	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	01-02
03-30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	03-30
31-33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31-33
34-36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	34-36
37-39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	37-39
40-42	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	40-42
43-45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	43-45
46-48	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	46-48
49-51	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	49-51
52-54	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	4AT	52-54
55-57	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4AT	4AT	55-57
58-60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4BT	5BT	58-60
61-63	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	5CT	6CT	61-63
64-66	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	6DT	6DT	64-66
67-69	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	4	6ET	7ET	67-69
70-72	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	1	3	1	2	4	7AS	8AS	70-72
73-75	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	3	2	2	3	1	3	4AT	8AS	8AS	73-75
76-78	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	1	2	3	4	2	2	4AT	2	3	5BT	8AS	9AS	76-78
79-81	0	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	2	3	4	5	3	3	5AT	3	4	6CT	9AS	10AS	79-81
82-84	0	2	4AT	5AT	3	4	4	5AT	2	3	5AT	6BT	3AT	3BT	6BT	4	4	6CT	9AS	10AS	82-84
85-87	1	3	5BT	6BT	4	4	5AT	6AT	3	4	6BT	7CT	4CT	4DT	7CT	5AT	5AT	7DT	10BS	11AS	85-87
88-90	1	4AT	5DT	7CT	5AT	4	6AT	7BT	4	5AT	7CT	8DT	5DT	5ET	7ET	6BT	6BT	8AS	11BS	12BS	88-90
91-93	1	4AT	7AS	7DT	6AT	5	6BT	8CT	5AT	6BT	8CT	9AS	6AS	6AS	8AS	7CT	7CT	9AS	11BS	12BS	91-93
94-96	2	5BT	8BS	8ET	7BT	5AT	7CT	9DT	5BT	7DT	9AS	10BS	6AS	6AS	9AS	7DT	7DT	9AS	12BS	13BS	94-96
97-99	2	5CT	9AS	9AS	7CT	6AT	8DT	10AS	6CT	8AS	9AS	10BS	7AS	7BS	9AS	8ET	8ET	10AS	13BS	13BS	97-99
100-102	13	12DS	10BS	9AS	8ET	6AT	9DT	11BS	6DT	8AS	10AS	11BS	7AS	7BS	10AS	9AS	9AS	11BS	13BS	14BS	100-102
103-105	3AT	13EP	10BP	9AS	9AP	7AT	10AS	13BS	7ET	9AP	11BS	12BS	8AS	8BS	11BS	9AS	9AS	11BS	14BS	15BP	103-105
											Maximum Results for Small Attacks										
106-108	4AT	11CS	8AP	10AS	7CT	7BT	9AS	10BS	5AP	7ET	9AP	11BS	7AS	7BS	11BS	13CS	10AS	11BS	15BP	15CS	106-108
109-111	4BT	11CP	9AS	10AS	7DT	7CT	9AP	11BS	6BP	8AP	10AP	12CS	8AS	8BS	12BS	14CS	10AS	12BS	15CS	16CP	109-111
112-114	4CT	12DK	9AP	11BS	8ET	8DT	10BS	11CP	8BP	8AS	10AS	12CS	8BS	8BS	13CS	15CP	11BS	13CS	16CP	17DS	112-114
115-117	5DT	12DS	10BS	11BS	8AP	8ET	10BP	12CS	9BS	9AP	11BP	13CP	9BS	9CS	13CP	15CS	12BS	14CP	16DS	17DP	115-117
118-120	5ET	13EP	10BP	12BS	9AP	9AP	11BS	13CP	9BP	9BS	12BS	14CS	9BS	9CP	14CS	16DP	12BS	14CS	17DP	18DS	118-120
											Maximum Results for Medium Attacks										
121-123	6AP	8BP	11BS	13CP	9AP	9BP	12BP	13CS	7AP	10BP	12BP	14DP	10CS	10CS	15CP	17DS	13CP	15CP	18DS	19EP	121-123
124-126	6AP	9BS	11BP	13CS	10AP	10BP	12CS	14DP	8BP	10BS	13CS	15DS	10CS	10CP	15DS	17DP	14CS	16DS	18EP	19ES	124-126
127-129	7BP	9BP	12CS	14CP	10BP	10BP	13CP	14DS	8BP	11BP	13CP	15DP	11CP	11CS	16DP	18DS	14CP	16DP	19ES	20EP	127-129
130-132	7BS	10CS	12CP	14DS	11BP	11BS	13CS	15DP	9BS	11CS	14CS	16DS	11CS	11DP	17DS	19EP	15DS	17DS	20EP	21ES	130-132
133-135	7BP	10CP	13CS	15DP	11BP	11CP	14CP	16DK	9BP	12CP	15DP	17DP	12DP	12DS	17DP	19ES	15DP	17DP	20ES	21EP	133-135
											Maximum Results for Large Attacks										
136-138	8BS	11CS	13CP	15DS	12BS	12CS	14CS	16ES	10CS	12CS	15DS	17ES	12DS	12DP	18ES	20EP	16DS	18ES	21EP	22ES	136-138
139-141	8CP	11CP	14CS	16EP	12CP	12CP	15DP	17EP	10CP	13CP	16DP	18EP	13DP	13ES	19EP	21ES	17EP	19EP	22ES	23EP	139-141
142-144	9CK	12DK	14DP	16EK	13CK	13CK	15DK	17EK	11CK	13DK	16EK	18EK	13EK	13EP	19EK	21EP	17EK	19EK	22EP	23EK	142-144
145-147	9DS	12DS	15DS	17ES	13DS	13DS	16ES	18ES	11DS	14DS	17ES	19ES	14ES	14ES	20ES	22ES	18ES	20ES	23ES	24ES	145-147
148-150	10EP	13EP	15EP	18FP	14DP	14DP	17EP	19FP	12EP	15EP	18EP	20FP	15EP	15EP	21EP	23FP	19EP	21EP	24FP	24FP	148-150
											Maximum Results for Huge Attacks										

NOTE: *An F-severity critical indicates an E-critical roll on the Puncture Critical Strike Table and a C-critical roll on the Slash Critical Strike Table.*

CRITICAL STRIKES: **P** = *Puncture*, **S** = *Slash*, **K** = *Krush*, **G** = *Grapple*, **U** = *Unbalance*, **T** = *Tiny*

CLAW LAW TABLE 4 - GRAPPLE/GRASP/ENVELOP/SWALLOW ATTACK TABLE

Roll	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
01-02	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
03-30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
31-33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
34-36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
37-39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
40-42	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
43-45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
46-48	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
49-51	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
52-54	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
55-57	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
58-60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
61-63	1AG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
64-66	1AG	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
67-69	1AG	1AG	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
70-72	1AG	1AG	1	1	1AG	1AG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
73-75	1AG	1AG	1AG	1	1AG	1AG	1AG	1	0	0	1	0	1AG	1AG	0	0	0	0	0	0
76-78	1AG	1AG	1AG	1	1AG	1AG	1AG	1	1AG	1AG	1AG	1	2AG	1AG	1	0	0	0	0	0
79-81	1AG	1AG	2AG	2AG	2AG	2AG	1AG	2AG	1AG	1AG	1AG	1	2AG	2AG	1	1	0	0	1	1
82-84	1AG	2AG	2AG	2AG	2AG	2AG	2AG	2AG	1AG	2AG	2AG	2AG	2AG	2AG	1	1	0	0	1	1
85-87	1AG	2AG	2AG	3AG	2AG	2AG	2AG	3AG	2AG	2AG	2AG	3AG	3AG	3AG	2AG	1	1AG	1	2AG	1
88-90	1AG	2AG	3AG	3AG	3AG	3AG	2AG	3AG	2AG	2AG	2AG	3AG	3AG	3AG	2AG	2	1AG	1	2AG	2
91-93	2BG	2AG	3AG	3AG	3AG	3AG	3AG	4AG	2AG	2AG	3AG	4AG	3AG	3AG	3AG	2	1AG	2AG	3AG	2
94-96	2BG	3AG	3AG	4AG	3AG	3AG	3AG	4AG	2AG	3AG	3AG	4AG	4AG	4AG	3AG	3	2AG	2AG	4AG	3
97-99	2BG	3AG	4AG	4AG	4AG	4AG	4AG	5AG	3AG	3AG	4AG	5AG	4AG	4AG	3AG	4AG	2AG	2AG	5AG	3
100-102	2BG	3AG	4AG	5AG	4AG	4AG	4AG	5AG	3AG	3AG	4AG	5AG	4AG	4AG	4AG	4AG	2AG	3AG	5AG	4
103-105	3BG	3BG	4BG	5BG	4BG	5BG	4AG	6BG	4BG	4BG	4AG	6AG	5BG	5BG	4AG	5AG	3AG	4AG	6AG	5AG
106-108	2CG	4BG	5BG	6BG	5BG	5BG	5BG	6BG	3BG	4BG	5BG	6AG	6BG	6BG	6AG	6AG	3AG	4AG	6AG	6AG
109-111	2CG	4BG	5BG	6BG	5BG	5BG	5BG	7BG	3BG	4BG	6BG	7AG	6BG	6BG	6AG	7AG	4AG	5AG	7AG	6AG
112-114	2CG	4BG	6BG	7BG	5BG	6BG	6BG	7BG	4BG	4BG	6BG	7AG	6BG	7BG	7AG	7AG	4AG	5AG	8AG	7AG
115-117	2CG	4CG	6CG	7CG	5CG	6CG	6CG	7CG	4CG	5CG	7CG	8BG	7CG	7CG	7BG	8BG	5BG	6AG	8BG	8AG
118-120	2CG	4CG	6CG	7CG	6CG	6CG	7CG	8CG	4CG	5CG	7CG	8BG	7CG	7CG	8BG	8BG	5BG	7BG	9BG	8AG

Maximum Results for Small Attacks

Roll	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
121-123	3DG	5CG	7CG	8CG	6CG	7CG	7CG	8CG	4CG	5CG	8CG	9BG	7CG	8CG	8BG	9BG	6BG	7BG	9BG	9AG
124-126	3DG	5CG	7CG	8CG	6CG	7CG	7CG	9CG	4CG	5CG	8CG	9CG	8CG	8CG	9CG	10CG	6CG	8CG	10CG	9AG
127-129	3DG	5DG	7DG	9DG	7DG	7DG	8DG	9DG	4DG	6DG	9DG	9CG	8DG	9DG	9CG	10CG	7CG	8CG	10CG	10BG
130-132	3DG	5DG	8DG	9DG	7DG	8DG	8DG	10DG	4DG	6DG	9DG	10CG	9DG	9DG	10CG	11CG	7CG	9CG	11CG	11BG
133-135	3DG	5DG	8DG	9DG	7DG	8DG	9DG	10DG	5DG	6DG	10DG	11DG	9DG	9DG	10DG	11DG	8DG	10DG	12DG	11CG

Maximum Results for Medium Attacks

Roll	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
136-138	3EG	6EG	8DG	10DG	8DG	8DG	9DG	11DG	5DG	6DG	10DG	11DG	9DG	10DG	11DG	11DG	8DG	10DG	12DG	12CG
139-141	3EG	6EG	9EG	10EG	8EG	9EG	9EG	11EG	5EG	7EG	11EG	12DG	9EG	10EG	11DG	13DG	9DG	11DG	13DG	13DG
142-144	3EG	6EG	9EG	11EG	8EG	9EG	10EG	12EG	5EG	7EG	11EG	12EG	10EG	11EG	12EG	13EG	9EG	12EG	13DG	13DG
145-147	3EG	6EG	9EG	11EG	8EG	9EG	10EG	12EG	5EG	7EG	11EG	13EG	10EG	11EG	12EG	14FG	10EG	13EG	14EG	14EG
148-150	4EG	7EG	10EG	12FG	9EG	10EG	11EG	13FG	6EG	8EG	12EG	14FG	11EG	12EG	13EG	14FG	11EG	13EG	15FG	15FG

Maximum Results for Large Attacks

Maximum Results for Huge Attacks

NOTE: An F-severity critical indicates an E-critical roll and a C-critical roll (both Grapple criticals).

NOTE: For each consecutive round that a creature obtains a critical strike on the same target (on this table), the creature obtains an additional +10 against that target.

CRITICAL STRIKES: P = Puncture, S = Slash, K = Krush, G = Grapple, U = Unbalance, T = Tiny.

TABLE 5 - HORN/TUSK ATTACK TABLE

CLAW LAW	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
01-02	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	01-02
03-30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	03-30
31-33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31-33
34-36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	34-36
37-39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	37-39
40-42	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40-42
43-45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	43-45
46-48	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	46-48
49-51	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	49-51
52-54	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	52-54
55-57	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3AT	55-57
58-60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	3	4BT	58-60
61-63	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	3	4AT	5CT	61-63
64-66	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	3	0	4	5BT	6DT	64-66
67-69	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	3	4AT	1	5	6CT	7AP	67-69
70-72	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	4	1	0	4AT	5BT	2	6AT	7DT	8AP	70-72
73-75	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	0	0	3	5AT	1	1	5BT	6CT	3	7BT	8AP	9AP	73-75
76-78	0	0	1	0	1	1	3	3	0	1	4	6BT	2	1	6CT	7DT	4	8CT	9AP	10AP	76-78
79-81	0	1	1	0	1	2	4	4	1	1	5AT	7CT	4AT	2AT	7DT	8AP	5AT	9DT	10AP	11AP	79-81
82-84	0	1	2	9AT	2	3	5	5AT	1	2	6BT	8DT	5BT	3BT	8AP	9AP	6BT	10AP	11AP	12AP	82-84
85-87	0	2	2	10BT	3	4	6AT	6BT	2	3AT	7CT	9AP	5CT	4CT	9AP	10AP	7CT	11AP	12AP	13AP	85-87
88-90	1	3	4	11CT	4	5	6BT	7CT	2	4BT	8DT	10AP	6DT	5DT	10AP	11AP	8DT	12AP	13AP	14AP	88-90
91-93	1	4AT	5	11DT	5	6	7CT	8DT	3AT	5CT	9AP	11AP	7AP	6AP	11AP	12AP	9AP	13AP	14AP	15BP	91-93
94-96	2	5BT	6AT	12AP	6AT	7BT	8DT	9AP	4BT	6DT	9AP	12AP	8AP	7AP	12AP	13AP	10AP	14AP	15BP	16BP	94-96
97-99	3	5CT	7BT	13AP	7BT	8CT	9AP	10AP	5CT	7AP	10AP	13AP	9AP	8AP	13AP	14AP	11AP	15AP	16BP	17BP	97-99
100-102	4AT	6DT	8CT	14AP	8CT	9DT	10AP	11AP	6DT	8AP	11AP	14BP	9BP	9BP	14BP	15BP	12AP	16AP	17BP	18BP	100-102
103-105	5BT	7AU	9DT	15AP	9DT	10AP	11AP	12AP	7AP	9AP	11AP	15CP	10AP	10AP	15BP	16BP	13AP	16AP	18BP	19BP	103-105

Maximum Results for Small Attacks

CLAW LAW	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
106-108	6CT	8AK	11AP	14AP	10AP	10AP	14AP	14AP	7AP	10AP	12AP	16BP	10AP	11BP	16BP	18CP	14AP	17BP	19BP	20CP	106-108
109-111	6DT	9AP	12AP	15AP	11AP	11AP	12AP	14BP	8AP	11AP	13BP	17CP	11AP	12BP	17BP	19CP	15AP	18BP	20CP	21DP	109-111
112-114	7AU	10AU	13AP	16BP	11AP	11AP	13BP	15CP	9AP	12AP	14BP	18CP	12BP	13BP	18CP	20CP	16BP	19BP	21CP	22DP	112-114
115-117	8AK	10AK	14AK	16BK	12AP	12AP	14BP	16CP	10AP	13BP	15BP	19CP	13BP	14BP	19CP	21CP	17BP	20CP	22DP	23DP	115-117
118-120	9AP	11BP	14BP	17BP	13AP	13AP	15BP	17CP	11BP	13BP	16CP	20CP	13BP	15CP	20CP	22DP	18CP	21CP	23DP	24DK	118-120

Maximum Results for Medium Attacks

CLAW LAW	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
121-123	10AU	12BU	15BK	18CK	14AP	14BP	16BP	18CP	12BP	14BP	17CP	21DK	14CP	16CP	21CK	23DK	19CK	22CK	24DP	25DP	121-123
124-126	11AK	13BK	16BP	19CP	15BP	15BP	17CP	19DP	13BP	15BP	17CP	22DP	15CP	17CP	22DP	24DP	20DP	23DP	25DK	26EK	124-126
127-129	12AP	14BP	17CK	20CK	16BP	16BP	18CK	20DK	13BP	16CK	18DK	23DK	16CK	18CK	23DK	25DK	21DK	24DK	26EP	27EP	127-129
130-132	12BU	15CU	18CP	21DP	16BK	16CK	18CP	21DP	14CP	17CP	19DP	24DP	17DP	19DP	24DP	26EP	22DP	25DP	27EU	28EU	130-132
133-135	13BK	15CK	18CK	21DK	17CP	17CP	19CK	22DK	15CK	18CK	20DK	25DK	17DK	20DK	25DK	27EK	23DK	26DK	28EK	29EK	133-135

Maximum Results for Large Attacks

CLAW LAW	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
136-138	14BP	16CP	19CP	22DP	18CK	18CK	20CP	23EP	16CP	19DP	21DP	26EP	18DP	21DP	26EP	28EP	24EP	27EP	29EP	30EP	136-138
139-141	15CU	17DU	20DU	23EU	19DP	19DP	21DU	24EU	17DU	20DU	22EU	27EU	19EU	22EU	27EU	29EU	25EU	28EU	30EU	31EU	139-141
142-144	16CK	18DK	21DK	24EK	20DK	20DK	22DK	25EK	18DK	21EK	23EK	28EK	20EK	23EK	28EK	30EK	26EK	29EK	31EK	32EK	142-144
145-147	17DP	19EP	22EP	25EP	21DP	21DP	23EP	26FU	19EP	22EP	24EU	29EP	21EP	24EP	29EP	31EP	27EP	30EP	32FU	33EP	145-147
148-150	18EU	20EU	23EU	26FU	22EU	22EU	24EU	27FU	20EU	23EU	25EU	30FU	22EU	25EU	30EU	33FU	29EU	31EU	34FU	35FU	148-150

Maximum Results for Huge Attacks

NOTE: An F-severity critical result indicates an E-critical roll on the Puncture Critical Strike Table and a C-critical roll on the Unbalance Critical Strike Table.

NOTE: If the attacking creature is "charging," it obtains a + 20 on this table in addition to its other bonuses.

CRITICAL STRIKES: **P** = Puncture, **S** = Slash, **K** = Krush, **G** = Grapple, **U** = Unbalance, **T** = Tiny

CLAW LAW — TABLE 6 - RAM/BUTT/BASH/KNOCK DOWN/SLUG ATTACK TABLE

Roll	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Roll
01-02	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	01-02
03-30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	03-30
31-33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31-33
34-36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	34-36
37-39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	37-39
40-42	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40-42
43-45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	43-45
46-48	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	46-48
49-51	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	49-51
52-54	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	52-54
55-57	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	55-57
58-60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	58-60
61-63	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	61-63
64-66	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	64-66
67-69	1AU	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	67-69
70-72	1AU	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	70-72
73-75	1AU	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	73-75
76-78	2AU	2AU	2AU	3AU	3AU	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	76-78
79-81	2AU	2AU	2AU	3AU	3AU	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	79-81
82-84	2AU	2AU	3AU	3AU	3AU	3	4AU	4AU	4	4	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	7	7	82-84
85-87	3AU	3AU	3AU	4AU	4AU	4AU	4AU	4AU	5AU	5AU	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	7	7	7	85-87
88-90	3AU	3AU	4AU	4AU	4AU	4AU	5AU	5AU	5AU	5AU	6AU	6AU	6	6	7AU	7	7	7	8	8	88-90
91-93	3AU	3AU	4AU	4AU	4AU	5AU	5AU	5AU	6AU	6AU	6AU	6AU	7AU	7AU	7AU	8AU	8AU	8	9AU	9	91-93
94-96	4AU	4AU	5AU	5AU	5AU	5AU	6AU	6AU	6AU	6AU	7AU	7AU	7AU	7AU	8AU	8AU	8AU	8	9AU	9AK	94-96
97-99	4AU	4AU	5AU	5AU	5AU	6AU	6AU	6AU	7AU	7AU	7AU	7AU	8AU	8AU	8AU	9AU	9AU	9AU	10AU	10AK	97-99
100-102	4AU	4AU	5AU	5AU	5AU	6AU	6AU	7AU	7AU	7AU	8AU	8AU	8AU	9AU	9AU	10AU	10AU	10AU	11AU	11AU	100-102
103-105	5AU	5AU	6AU	6AU	6AU	7AU	7AU	7AU	8AU	8AU	8AU	8AU	9AU	9AU	9AU	10AU	10AU	10AU	11AU	11AK	103-105

Maximum Results for Small Attacks

Roll	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Roll
106-108	5BU	5AU	6BU	6AU	6AU	7AU	7AU	8BU	8AU	8AU	9AU	9AU	9AU	10AU	10AU	11AU	11AU	11AU	12AU	12AU	106-108
109-111	5BU	5AU	6BU	6AU	6AU	7AU	7AU	8BU	8AU	8AU	9AU	9AU	9AU	10AU	10AU	11AU	11AU	11AU	12AU	12AK	109-111
112-114	6BU	6BU	7BU	7BU	7BU	8BU	8BU	9BU	9BU	9BU	10BU	10BU	10AU	11BU	11BU	12BU	12BU	12AU	13BU	13AU	112-114
115-117	6BU	6BU	7BU	7BU	7BU	8BU	8BU	9BU	9BU	9BU	10BU	10BU	10AU	11BU	11BU	12BU	12BU	12AU	13BU	13BK	115-117
118-120	6BU	6BU	7BU	7BU	8BU	8BU	9BU	9BU	9BU	10BU	10BU	11BU	11BU	11BU	12BU	12BU	13CU	13BU	14CU	14BU	118-120

Maximum Results for Medium Attacks

Roll	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Roll
121-123	7BU	7BU	8BU	8BU	8BU	9CU	9BU	10CU	10CU	10BU	11CU	11BU	11BU	12CU	12BU	13CU	13CU	13BU	14CU	14CK	121-123
124-126	7BU	7CU	8CU	8CU	9CU	9CU	10CU	10CU	10CU	11CU	11CU	12CU	12CU	12CU	13CU	13CU	14CU	14CU	15CU	15CU	124-126
127-129	7CU	8CU	8CU	8CU	9CU	9CU	10CU	10CU	11CU	11CU	12CU	12CU	13DU	13DU	14DU	14DU	15DU	15DU	16DU	16DK	127-129
130-132	8CU	8CU	9CU	9CU	10CU	10CU	11CU	11CU	11CU	12CU	12DU	13DU	13DU	13DU	14DU	14DU	15DU	15DU	16DU	16DU	130-132
133-135	8CK	9CU	9CU	10CU	10DU	11DU	11DU	12DU	12DU	13DU	13DU	14DU	14DU	15DU	15DU	16DU	16DU	16DU	17DU	17DK	133-135

Maximum Results for Large Attacks

Roll	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Roll
136-138	8CU	9CU	9DU	10DU	10DU	11DU	11DU	12DU	12DU	13DU	13EU	14EU	14EU	15EU	15EU	16EU	16EU	16EU	17EU	17EU	136-138
139-141	9DK	10DU	10DU	11DU	11DU	12DU	12EU	13EU	13EU	14EU	14EU	15EU	15EU	16EU	16EU	17EU	17EU	17EU	18EU	18EK	139-141
142-144	9DU	10DU	10EU	11EU	11EU	12EU	12EU	13EU	13EU	14EU	14EU	15EU	15EU	16EU	16EU	17EU	17EU	17EU	18EU	18EU	142-144
145-147	9EK	10EU	10EU	11EU	11EU	12EU	12EU	13EU	13EU	14EU	14EU	15EU	15EU	16EU	16EU	17EU	17EU	18EU	18EU	19EK	145-147
148-150	10EU	11EU	11EU	12EU	12EU	13EU	13EU	14EU	14EU	15EU	15EU	16EU	16EU	17EU	17EU	18EU	18EU	19EU	19FU	20EU	148-150

Maximum Results for Huge Attacks

NOTE: *An F-severity critical result indicates an E-critical roll on the Unbalance Critical Strike Table and a C-critical roll on the Krush Critical Strike Table.*

NOTE: *If the attacking creature is "charging," it obtains + 20 on this table in addition to any other bonuses.*

CRITICAL STRIKES: P = *Puncture,* **S** = *Slash,* **K** = *Krush,* **G** = *Grapple,* **U** = *Unbalance,* **T** = *Tiny*

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TABLE 7 - STINGER ATTACK TABLE

	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
01-02	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	01-02
03-30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	03-30
31-33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31-33
34-36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	34-36
37-39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	37-39
40-42	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	40-42
43-45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	43-45
46-48	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	46-48
49-51	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	49-51
52-54	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	52-54
55-57	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	2AT	55-57
58-60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2AT	2AT	58-60
61-63	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	2	2AT	3AT	61-63
64-66	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	2	3AT	3AT	64-66
67-69	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	2	2	2AT	3AT	3AT	67-69
70-72	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	1	3	2	3AT	3AT	4AT	70-72
73-75	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	3	1	1	2	3AT	2	3AT	4AT	4AT	73-75
76-78	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	3	0	0	1	3	1	1	2	3AT	3	3AT	4AT	4BT	76-78
79-81	0	1	2	1	1	1	2	3AT	0	0	2	3AT	1	2	2	4AT	3AT	4AT	4BT	4BT	79-81
82-84	0	1	2	2	1	1	2	3AT	0	1	2	4AT	2	2	3AT	4AT	3AT	4AT	5BT	5BT	82-84
85-87	0	1	2	3AT	1	1	2AT	4AT	0	1	3AT	4AT	2	2AT	3AT	4AT	4AT	4AT	5BT	5BT	85-87
88-90	0	1	3	3AT	2	2	3AT	4AT	0	1	3AT	4AT	2	2AT	3AT	5AT	4AT	4BT	5BT	5CT	88-90
91-93	0	1	3AT	4AT	2	2	3AT	4AT	0	1AT	3AT	5AT	2AT	3AT	4AT	5BT	4AT	5BT	6CT	6CT	91-93
94-96	1	2	3AT	4AT	3AT	2	3AT	5BT	1	2AT	4AT	5AT	3AT	3AT	4AT	5BT	4AT	5BT	6CT	6CT	94-96
97-99	1	2	4AT	5AT	3AT	2AT	4AT	5BT	1	2AT	4AT	5BT	3AT	3AT	5AT	5BT	5AT	5BT	6CT	6CT	97-99
100-102	1	2AT	4AT	5AT	3BT	2AT	4AT	5BT	1	2AT	4AT	6BT	3AT	3AT	5AT	6BT	5BT	6BT	6CT	7CT	100-102
103-105	1AT	2AT	4AT	5BT	3BT	3AT	4AT	6BT	2AT	2AT	5BT	6BT	3AT	3AT	5BT	6CT	5BT	6CT	7CT	7CT	103-105
Maximum Results for Small Attacks																					
106-108	1AT	2AT	5BT	5BT	3AT	3AT	5AT	6CT	2AT	3AT	5BT	7CT	4AT	4BT	6BT	7CT	6BT	6CT	7CT	7DT	106-108
109-111	1AT	3AT	6BT	6BT	3AT	3AT	5BT	6CT	3BT	3BT	5BT	7CT	4BT	4BT	6CT	7CT	6BT	7CT	7DT	8DT	109-111
112-114	2AT	3AT	6CT	6CT	3AT	3AT	5BT	7CT	3BT	3BT	6BT	7DT	4BT	4BT	6CT	7CT	6CT	7CT	8DT	8DT	112-114
115-117	2AT	3BT	6CT	6CT	3BT	4CT	5BT	7CT	4BT	4BT	6CT	8DT	4BT	4CT	7CT	8CT	6CT	7CT	8DT	8DT	115-117
118-120	2AT	3BT	7CT	7CT	3BT	4BT	6BT	7CT	4BT	4BT	6CT	8DT	4CT	4CT	7CT	8DT	7CT	7DT	8DT	8DT	118-120
Maximum Results for Medium Attacks																					
121-123	2AT	4BT	5BT	7CT	4BT	4BT	6CT	8DT	3BT	4BT	7CT	10ET	5CT	6DT	7DT	8DT	7DT	8DT	9DT	9ET	121-123
124-126	2AT	4BT	6CT	7DT	4BT	4BT	6CT	8DT	4CT	4CT	7CT	10AP	5CT	6ET	8DT	9DT	7DT	8DT	9ET	9ET	124-126
127-129	2BT	4BT	6CT	7DT	4BT	4BT	7CT	8DT	4DT	5CT	7DT	11AP	5CT	6AP	8DT	9DT	8DT	8DT	9ET	9AP	127-129
130-132	3BT	4BT	6CT	8DT	4CT	4CT	7CT	9DT	4ET	5CT	8DT	11AP	5DT	6AP	8DT	9DT	8ET	9DT	10AP	10AP	130-132
133-135	3BT	4CT	6CT	8DT	4CT	5CT	7CT	9DT	5ET	5DT	8DT	12BP	5DT	6AP	9ET	10DT	8AP	9AP	10AP	10AP	133-135
Maximum Results for Large Attacks																					
136-138	3BT	5CT	7CT	8ET	5CT	6AP	9ET	10ET	6DT	5DT	9AP	10ET	6DT	6DT	9AP	10AP	8AP	9AP	10AP	10AP	136-138
139-141	3CT	5CT	7DT	9ET	5DT	6AP	9ET	10AP	6ET	6DT	9ET	10AP	6ET	6ET	9AP	10AP	9AP	10AP	11AP	11BP	139-141
142-144	3CT	5DT	7DT	9ET	5DT	6AP	9ET	10AP	6AP	6ET	9AP	11AP	6AP	6AP	10AP	11AP	9AP	10AP	11BP	11BP	142-144
145-147	3DT	5ET	7ET	9ET	5ET	6AP	9AP	10ET	6AP	6ET	9AP	11AP	6AP	6AP	10AP	11AP	9AP	10BP	11BP	11BP	145-147
148-150	4ET	6AP	8AP	10BP	6AP	6AP	9AP	11BP	7AP	7AP	10DT	12BP	7AP	7AP	11BP	12BP	10BP	11BP	12BP	12BP	148-150
Maximum Results for Huge Attacks																					

NOTE: *A critical result means the attack has injected poison, in addition to a normal critical result (if applicable).*

NOTE: *Swarms of very small creatures (i.e., bees) could roll on this table as a small attack.* **NOTE:** *A really huge stinger (longer than 1') should use the Horn Attack Table.*

CRITICAL STRIKES: **P** = *Puncture,* **S** = *Slash,* **K** = *Krush,* **G** = *Grapple,* **U** = *Unbalance,* **T** = *Tiny*

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TABLE 8 - TINY ANIMAL ATTACK TABLE

Roll	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
01-02	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
03-30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
31-33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
34-36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
37-39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
40-42	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
43-45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
46-48	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
49-51	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2AT
52-54	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2AT	2AT	3AT
55-57	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2AT	2AT	2AT	3AT	3AT	3AT
58-60	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2AT	2AT	2AT	2AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT
61-63	0	0	1	2	2	2	2AT	2AT	2AT	2AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	4AT
64-66	0	0	1	2	2AT	2AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	4AT	4AT	4BT
67-69	0	0	1	3	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	4AT	4AT	4AT	4BT	4BT	5BT
70-72	0	0	2	3	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	3AT	4AT	4AT	4AT	4AT	4BT	4BT	4BT	5BT	5BT	5BT
73-75	0	1	2	3	3AT	3AT	4AT	4AT	4AT	4AT	4BT	4BT	4BT	4BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT
76-78	0	1	2	4	4AT	4AT	4BT	4BT	4BT	4BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	6BT
79-81	0	1	3	4AT	4BT	4BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	6BT	6BT	6CT
82-84	0	1	3	4AT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	6BT	6BT	6BT	6CT	6CT	6CT
85-87	0	1	3	5AT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	5BT	6BT	6BT	6BT	6BT	6CT	6CT	6CT	6CT	6CT	7CT
88-90	1	2	4AT	5AT	5BT	5BT	6BT	6BT	6BT	6BT	6CT	6CT	6CT	6CT	6CT	6CT	6CT	7CT	7CT	7CT
91-93	1	2AT	4AT	5AT	6BT	6BT	6CT	6CT	6CT	6CT	6CT	6CT	6CT	6CT	7CT	7CT	7CT	7CT	7CT	8CT
94-96	1	2AT	4AT	6AT	6CT	6CT	6CT	6CT	6CT	6CT	7CT	7CT	7CT	7CT	7CT	7CT	7CT	8CT	8CT	8CT
97-99	1	2AT	5AT	6AT	6CT	6CT	7CT	7CT	7CT	7CT	7CT	7CT	7CT	7CT	8CT	8CT	8CT	8CT	8CT	8CT
100-102	1AT	3AT	5AT	6BT	7CT	7CT	7CT	7CT	7CT	7CT	8CT	8CT	8CT	8CT	8CT	8CT	8CT	8CT	8CT	9CT
103-105	2AT	3AT	5AT	7BT	7CT	7CT	8CT	8CT	8CT	8CT	8CT	8CT	8CT	8CT	8CT	8CT	8CT	9CT	9CT	9CT

Normal Maximum Results for an Attack

Roll	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
106-108	2AT	3AT	5BT	7BT	3AT	3BT	5BT	7CT	4BT	4CT	6CT	7CT	6BT	7CT	8CT	9CT	8CT	9CT	9CT	9CT
109-111	2AT	3AT	6BT	7BT	3AT	3BT	5BT	7CT	4CT	4CT	6CT	7CT	6CT	7CT	8CT	9CT	8CT	9CT	9CT	10CT
112-114	2AT	4BT	6BT	8CT	3AT	3BT	5BT	8CT	4CT	4BT	6CT	7CT	7CT	8DT	8CT	9DT	8CT	9DT	9CT	10CT
115-117	2AT	4BT	6BT	8CT	3BT	4CT	5CT	8CT	4CT	4BT	7CT	8DT	7CT	8DT	9DT	9DT	9CT	10DT	10CT	10DT
118-120	3AT	4BT	7BT	8CT	4BT	4CT	5CT	8CT	4BT	4BT	7CT	8DT	7DT	8DT	9DT	9DT	9DT	10DT	10CT	11DT

Maximum Results for an Attack the Round After a Critical Result

Roll	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
121-123	3AT	4BT	7CT	9CT	4BT	4CT	5CT	9CT	4CT	4BT	8CT	10DT	6DT	6DT	10DT	11DT	9DT	10DT	11DT	11DT
124-126	3BT	5BT	7CT	9CT	4BT	5CT	5CT	9CT	4CT	5BT	9DT	11DT	7DT	7DT	10DT	11DT	10DT	11DT	11DT	12DT
127-129	3BT	5CT	7CT	9CT	4BT	5CT	5CT	9CT	4CT	5CT	9DT	11DT	7DT	7DT	10DT	11DT	10DT	11DT	11DT	12DT
130-132	3BT	5CT	9DT	10CT	4CT	5DT	5DT	10DT	5DT	5CT	9DT	11DT	7DT	7DT	10DT	11DT	10DT	11DT	11DT	12DT
133-135	4BT	5CT	8CT	10DT	5CT	6DT	5DT	10DT	5DT	5CT	10DT	12DT	8DT	8DT	11DT	12DT	10DT	12DT	12DT	13DT

Maximum Results for an Attack the Round After Two Consecutive Critical Results

Roll	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
136-138	4BT	6CT	8CT	10DT	5CT	6DT	5DT	10DT	6DT	6CT	10DT	13DT	8DT	8DT	12DT	13DT	10DT	13DT	12DT	13DT
139-141	4CT	6CT	9CT	11DT	5CT	6DT	6DT	11DT	6DT	6CT	11DT	13DT	9DT	9DT	12DT	13DT	11DT	13DT	12DT	13DT
142-144	4CT	6CT	9DT	11DT	5CT	6DT	6DT	11DT	6DT	6DT	11DT	13DT	9DT	9DT	13DT	14DT	11DT	13DT	13DT	14DT
145-147	4CT	6DT	9DT	11DT	5CT	6DT	6DT	11DT	6DT	6DT	11DT	13DT	9DT	9DT	13DT	14DT	11DT	13DT	13DT	14DT
148-150	5DT	7DT	10DT	12DT	6DT	7DT	7DT	12DT	7DT	7DT	12DT	14DT	10DT	11DT	14DT	15DT	12DT	14DT	14DT	15DT

Maximum Results for an Attack the Round After Three or More Consecutive Critical Results

NOTE: *This table is used only for very small animals (e.g. house cats).*

NOTE: *The maximum result depends upon how many consecutive critical results were achieved in the rounds immediately proceeding the attack.*

CRITICAL STRIKES: **P** = *Puncture*, **S** = *Slash*, **K** = *Krush*, **G** = *Grapple*, **U** = *Unbalance*, **T** = *Tiny*

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TABLE 9 - TRAMPLE/STOMP ATTACK TABLE

20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Roll
F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	01-02
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	03-30
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	31-33
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	34-36
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	37-39
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	4AT	40-42
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	4AT	5BT	43-45
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	4AT	5BT	6CT	46-48
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	4AT	5BT	6CT	7DT	49-51
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	4AT	5BT	6CT	7DT	8ET	52-54
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	4AT	5BT	6CT	7DT	8ET	9AK	55-57
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	4AT	5BT	6CT	7DT	8ET	9AK	10AK	58-60
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	4AT	5BT	6CT	7DT	8ET	9AK	10AK	11AK	61-63
0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	4AT	5BT	6CT	7DT	8ET	9AK	10AK	11AK	12AK	64-66
0	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	2	3	4AT	5BT	6CT	7DT	8ET	9AK	10AK	11AK	12AK	13AK	67-69
0	0	2	3	0	0	1	2	3	4AT	5BT	6CT	7DT	8ET	9AK	10AK	11AK	12AK	13AK	14AK	70-72
0	1	3	4AT	0	1	2	3	4AT	5BT	6CT	7DT	8ET	9AK	10AK	11AK	12AK	13AK	14AK	15AK	73-75
0	2	4AT	5BT	1	2	3	4AT	5BT	6CT	7DT	8ET	9AK	10AK	11AK	12AK	13AK	14AK	15AK	16BK	76-78
1	3	5AT	6CT	2	3	4AT	5BT	6CT	7DT	8ET	9AK	10AK	11AK	12AK	13AK	14AK	15AK	16BK	17BK	79-81
1	4AT	6BT	7DT	3	4AT	5BT	6CT	7DT	8ET	9AK	10AK	11AK	12AK	13AK	14AK	15AK	16BK	17BK	18BK	82-84
2	4BT	7CT	8ET	4AT	5BT	6CT	7DT	8ET	9AK	10AK	11AK	12AK	13AK	14AK	15AK	16BK	17BK	18BK	19BK	85-87
2	5CT	7DT	9AK	5BT	6CT	7DT	8ET	9AK	10AK	11AK	12AK	13AK	14AK	15AK	16BK	17BK	18BK	19BK	20BK	88-90
3AT	6DT	8ET	10AK	6CT	7DT	8ET	9AK	10AK	11AK	12AK	13AK	14AK	15AK	16BK	17BK	18BK	19BK	20BK	21BK	91-93
4BT	6ET	8AK	11AK	7DT	8ET	9AK	10AK	11AK	12AK	13AK	14AK	15AK	16BK	17BK	18BK	19BK	20BK	21BK	22CK	94-96
4CT	7AK	9AK	12AK	8ET	9AK	10AK	11AK	12AK	13AK	14AK	15AK	16BK	17BK	18BK	19BK	20BK	21BK	22CK	23CK	97-99
5DT	7AK	10AK	13AK	9AK	10AK	11AK	12AK	13AK	14AK	15AK	16BK	17BK	18BK	19BK	20BK	21BK	22CK	23CK	24CK	100-102
5ET	8AK	10AK	14BK	10AK	11AK	12AK	13AK	14AK	15AK	16BK	17BK	18BK	19BK	20BK	21BK	22CK	23CK	24CK	25CK	103-105

Maximum Results for Small Attacks

20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Roll
6AK	9AK	11AK	15BK	11AK	12AK	13AK	14AK	15AK	16BK	17BK	18BK	19BK	20BK	21BK	22CK	23CK	24CK	25CK	26CK	106-108
7AK	9AK	12BK	16CK	12AK	13AK	14AK	15AK	16BK	17BK	18BK	19BK	20BK	21BK	22CK	23CK	24CK	25CK	26CK	27CK	109-111
7AK	10AK	12BK	16CK	13AK	14AK	15AK	16BK	17BK	18BK	19BK	20BK	21BK	22CK	23CK	24CK	25CK	26CK	27CK	28CK	112-114
8AK	11BK	13BK	17CK	14AK	15AK	16BK	17BK	18BK	19BK	20BK	21BK	22CK	23CK	24CK	25CK	26CK	27CK	28CK	29CK	115-117
8AK	11BK	13BK	18CK	15AK	16BK	17BK	18BK	19BK	20BK	21BK	22CK	23CK	24CK	25CK	26CK	27CK	28CK	29CK	30CK	118-120

Maximum Results for Medium Attacks

20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Roll
9BK	12BK	14CK	19CK	16BK	17BK	18BK	19BK	20BK	21BK	22CK	23CK	24CK	25CK	26CK	27CK	28CK	29CK	30CK	31DK	121-123
10BK	12BK	15CK	19CK	17BK	18BK	19BK	20BK	21BK	22CK	23CK	24CK	25CK	26CK	27CK	28CK	29CK	30CK	31DK	32DK	124-126
10BK	13CK	15CK	20DK	18BK	19BK	20BK	21BK	22CK	23CK	24CK	25CK	26CK	27CK	28CK	29CK	30CK	31DK	32DK	33EK	127-129
11BK	14CK	16CK	21DK	19BK	20BK	21BK	22CK	23CK	24CK	25CK	26CK	27CK	28CK	29CK	30CK	31DK	32DK	33EK	34EK	130-132
11CK	14CK	16CK	22EK	20BK	21BK	22CK	23CK	24CK	25CK	26CK	27CK	28CK	29CK	30CK	31DK	32DK	33EK	34EK	35EK	133-135

Maximum Results for Large Attacks

20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Roll
12CK	15CK	17DK	22EK	21BK	22CK	23CK	24CK	25CK	26CK	27CK	28CK	29CK	30CK	31DK	32DK	33EK	34EK	35EK	36EK	136-138
13DK	16DK	18DK	23EK	22CK	23CK	24CK	25CK	26CK	27CK	28CK	29CK	30CK	31DK	32DK	33EK	34EK	35EK	36EK	37EK	139-141
13DK	16DK	18DK	24EK	23CK	24CK	25CK	26CK	27CK	28CK	29CK	30CK	31DK	32DK	33EK	34EK	35EK	36EK	37EK	38EK	142-144
14EK	17EK	19EK	25EK	24CK	25CK	26CK	27CK	28CK	29CK	30CK	31DK	32DK	33EK	34EK	35EK	36EK	37EK	38EK	39EK	145-147
14FK	18FK	20FK	26FK	25CK	26CK	27CK	28CK	29CK	30CK	31DK	32DK	33EK	34EK	35EK	36EK	37EK	38EK	39EK	40FK	148-150

Maximum Results for Huge Attacks

NOTE: An F-severity critical indicates an E-critical roll and a C-critical roll (both Krush criticals)

NOTE: If the target is down the attacker obtains +30 in addition to its other bonuses

CRITICAL STRIKES: P = Puncture, S = Slash, K = Krush, G = Grapple, U = Unbalance, T = Tiny

	A	B	C	D	E
01-05	Dubious strike. +0 hits.	Not enough. +0 hits.	Real weak. +0 hits.	HA!	+1 hit.
06-10	Zip.	No bonus. +0 hits.	Nothing extra.	+1 hit.	+2 hits.
11-15	Looking bad. +0 hits.	+1 hit.	+1 hit.	+1 hit.	+2 hits.
16-20	+1 hit.	+1 hit.	+1 hit.	+2 hits.	Cutting strike. +2 hits and foe takes +1 hit per round.
21-35	+1 hit.	+2 hits.	+2 hits.	+3 hits.	Minor calf wound. +2 hits and foe takes +1 hit per round.
36-45	Cruel blow. +2 hits.	+3 hits.	Light wound. +2 hits and foe takes +1 hit per round.	Leg strike. If foe has no leg armor, +5 hits and he takes +1 hit per rnd.	Leg hit. +3 hits and foe takes +1 hit per round.
46-50	Poor follow through. You lose a claw and fight at +5 for 2 rounds. Foe takes +4 hits.	+3 hits.	+4 hits.	Mild puncture. +3 hits and foe takes +1 hit per round.	Lower back strike. +5 hits. Foe must parry next round and takes +1 hit per round.
51-55	Leaping chest strike yields +3 hits.	Light wound. Foe takes +1 hit per round. +3 hits.	Mild chest wound. Foe takes +2 hits per rounds. +4 hits.	Slash foe's lower chest. If foe has no metal chest armor, +5 hits and +3 per round.	Chest strike. +6 hits and foe is forced to parry next round. Foe takes +2 hits pr round.
56-60	Light thigh wound. Foe takes +1 hit per round. +1 hit.	Thigh strike, but no real penetration. +6 hits.	Mild thigh wound stuns foe next round. +4 hits and foe takes +2 hits per round.	Thigh strike stuns foe for next round. +6 hits and foe takes +2 hits per round.	Thigh wound. Foe is stunned for next round. +7 hits and foe takes +3 hits per round.
61-65	Mild forearm wound. Foe takes +2 hits per round. +2 hits.	Raking forearm strike leaves nasty scar. Foe takes +2 hits per round. +3 hits.	Forearm strike. Foe is forced to parry for 2 rounds. +3 hits and foe takes +2 hits per round.	Forearm wound. Foe is forced to parry for 2 rounds. +5 hits. Foe takes +2 hits per round. Add +10 to your next roll.	Strike to forearm. Foe is stunned next round and you gain initiative for next 2 rounds. Foe takes +3 hits per round. +6 hits.
66	Leg strike. Foe is stunned and unable to parry next round. +4 hits. Foe takes +2 hits per round.	Calf strike. Foe tears muscle, is stunned 2 rounds, and is at -20. +5 hits.	Bizarre wrist strike disarms foe. +4 hits. Foe is stunned next round. Add +10 to your next roll.	Astounding head strike. If foe has a helm, +4 hits. If not, +7 hits and foe is unable to parry for 6 rounds.	Bizarre strike to eyes destroys 1 eye and blinds the other eye for 2 days. Foe is at -95 and is stunned for 24 rounds.
67-70	Shoulder strike. Foe takes +1 hit per round and must parry next round. +3 hits.	Upper chest strike. Foe is stunned next round. +4 hits. Foe takes +1 hit per round.	Strike to foe's shoulder. Foe takes +2 hits per round. +5 hits. Foe is stunned next round at -20.	Upper arm strike. Foe stunned and unable to parry next rnd. Foe takes +2 hits per round. +6 hits.	Inspired shoulder strike tears muscle. Foe is stunned and unable to parry next rnd. Foe is at -20. +7 hits.
71-75	Lower leg strike. If foe has leg armor, +1 hit. If not, foe takes +4 hits and +2 hits per round. Foe has initiative next round.	Strike to lower leg. If foe has leg armor, +3 hits. If not, foe takes +6 hits, +2 hits per rounds, and must parry next 2 rounds.	Calf strike. Slash muscle. Foe is at -20. Wound gives foe +2 hits per round, and stuns him for 2 rounds.	Lower leg strike. If foe has leg armor, +3 hits and he is stunned next round. If not, foe is stunned 2 rounds, is unable to parry next round.	Vicious leg wound. Foe takes +4 hits per round and is stunned 3 rounds. +5 hits.
76-80	Weak, but precise strike to foe's arm. Foe takes +1 hit per round and is stunned next round. +3 hits.	Strong, but imprecise arm strike. Foe takes +2 hits per round and is at -15 due to moderate wound. +5 hits.	Forearm strike. Muscle and tendon slashed. Foe fights at -25, takes +2 hits per round, and is stunned 2 rounds. +5 hits.	Arm strike. Muscle and tendon torn. Foe fights at -25, takes +2 hits per rounds, and is stunned 3 rounds. +5 hits.	Sly arm strike gives foe a troublesome wound. Foe is stunned and unable to parry for 2 rounds and takes 3 hits per round.
81-85	Strike to foe's face. +4 hits. Foe is stunned next round and takes +2 hits per round.	Flying face strike. If foe has facial armor, +2 hits and foe must parry next round. If not, foe takes +3 hits per round and stunned for 3 rounds.	Head strike. If foe has helm, +3 hits and he is stunned next round. If not, foe has vicious scar, takes +3 hits per round, and is at -40.	Acrobatic face strike. If foe has facial armor, +5 hits. If not, foe's nose torn and he takes +3 hits per round, is stunned 3 rounds, and is at -40.	Head strike. If foe has helm, +4 hits and he is stunned next round. If not, foe takes +3 hits per round, fights at -25, and is stunned 9 rounds.
86-90	Sudden, well-placed blow. Foe is stunned for 2 rounds. +6 hits.	Slash foe's neck. Foe takes +2 hits per round and is stunned for 3 rounds. +5 hits.	Shoulder strike spins foe. Foe is stunned and unable to parry 2 rounds. +6 hits.	Strike to foe's weapon arm. Foe is disarmed and stunned next round. +5 hits.	Upper thigh wound, muscle torn. Foe is at -40 and takes +3 hits pr round. +4 hits. Foe is stunned for 3 rounds, unable to parry 1 round.
91-95	Leaping head strike. If foe has helm, +3 hits and foe is stunned next round. If not, foe is at -30 and stunned 2 rounds. Ear torn.	Wrist strike. Wound yields +2 hits per round. Foe is stunned fo 3 rounds and unable to parry next round. +5 hits.	Neck strike. Foe is stunned and unable to parry for 2 rounds and takes +2 hits per round. Foe fights at -20. +3 hits.	Well-timed attack tears muscle in thumb on foe's hand. Foe is disarmed and stunned and unable to parry 2 rounds. Foe fights at -50.	Dazzling leap knocks foe down. Foe is disarmed and unconscious. +9 hits.
96-99	Insulting strike to foe's nose. If foe has full helm, he is stunned 2 rnds. If not, foe has shredded nose, takes +3 hits per rnd, and is stunned 9 rnds.	Head strikke. Foe is blinded by bleeding, takes +3 hits per round, and is stunned and unable to parry for 3 rounds. Foe at -40 while bleeding.	Slash foe's Achilles tendon. Foe is knocked down and is stunned and unable to parry for 3 rounds. Foe takes +1 hit per round, operates at -75.	Strike to foe's eyes. If foe has full helm, he is blind and at -95 for 1 week. If not, foe loses 1 eye and is blind in the other...and at -100.	Head strike knocks foe down. Foe has massive concussion and dies in 9 rounds due to shock and internal bleeding. Pitiful sight.
100	Strike to foe's eyes. If foe has full helm, he is stunned and unable to parry for 2 rounds. If not, foe loses 1 eye, is at -75, and is stunned and unable to parry for 3 rounds.	Slashing throat attack knocks foe down. Foe is stunned and unable to parry for 6 rounds, takes +3 hits per rounds, and fights -50.	Bizarre attack to foe's head area causes foe to strike himself. Foe must roll on the "E" column on the crush critical strike table.	Strike to foe's eyes. +10 hits. Foe is stunned and unable to parry for 6 rounds, takes +3 hits per round, and is at -95. Blindness permanent.	Unbelievable neck strike knocks foe down. Vein and artery are severed. Foe takes +20 hits per round, dies after 6 inactive rounds.

	A	B	C	D	E
01-05	Nary a thing extra. +0 hits	Fairly weak. +0 zip.	Nope.	+1 hit.	+2 hits.
06-10	Sorry pal, maybe next time.	+1 hit.	+2 hits.	+3 hits.	+5 hits.
11-15	Glancing strike. +3 hits.	Lame side strike. +4 hits.	Weak blow. +5 hits.	Back strike. +6 hits.	Blow to back. +7 hits.
16-20	Foe must parry next round. +3 hits.	Glancing side blow. +4 hits and foe must parry next round.	Side strike. Foe must parry next round. +5 hits.	Blow to foe's side. Foe is at -10 next round. +7 hits.	Side blow. Foe is at -20 next round. +8 hits.
21-35	On line, but weak. Foe must parry next round. +4 hits.	Foe is unbalanced and is at -20 next round. +5 hits.	Chest strike. Foe is stunned next round. +6 hits.	Blow is weak but stuns foe for next round. +8 hits.	Blow cracks foe's rib. Foe is stunned and at -10 next round. +9 hits.
36-45	Break foe's concentration. You gain initiative for next round. +4 hits.	Leg strike unsteadies foe. +5 hits. You gain initiative next rnd. Foe is at -5 for 2 rnds.	Blow to leg. Foe is at -40 next round. +5 hits.	Calf strike. Foe's hurt muscle impairs maneuvers by -25. You gain the initiative next rnd. +7 hits.	Hard glancing blow to leg. If foe has leg armor, +10 hits. If not, +12 hits and foe stunned for 2 rnds.
46-50	Back strike. +5 hits. Foe must parry next round at -10. Good, glancing shot.	Back hit forces foe to parry next round at -20. +5 hits.	Lower back strike. Foe reels and is stunned and unable to parry next round. +5 hits.	Blow to back spins foe. +8 hits and foe is stunned and unable to parry next round.	Strong back blow staggers foe. +12 hits. Foe is stunned and sadly unable to parry next round.
51-55	Chest strike knocks foe back. Foe must parry next round at -20. +5 hits.	Blow stuns foe for next round. +5 hits.	Blast staggers foe. +6 hits and foe is stunned and unable to parry next round.	Chest strike takes wind out of foe. +10 hits. Foe is stunned and unable to parry next round.	Foe is knocked down. +12 hits. Foe is stunned and sadly unable to parry next round.
56-60	Glancing leg strike. If foe has leg armor, +5 hits. If not, +7 hits and foe is stunned next round.	Thigh strike bruises foe. +6 hits. Foe is forced to parry at -30 next round.	Skipping calf strike. If foe has leg armor, +7 hits. If not, +9 hits, foe is stunned 2 rounds, and moves at -10.	Thigh strike. +12 hits. Foe is stunned for 2 rounds. You have initiative next 3 rounds.	Glancing strike to leg. Foe is stunned for 3 rounds. +14 hits.
61-65	Arm strike. Foe is stunned for next round. +6 hits.	Forearm strike disarms foe. +6 hits.	Shoulder strike disarms foe and leaves foe stunned for 2 rounds. +6 hits.	Arm strike disarms foe. Foe is stunned for 2 rounds. Add 20 to next action. +7 hits.	Blow to shoulder spins foe. +13 hits. Foe is stunned and unable to parry for 2 rounds.
66	Shoulder strike sends foe spinning. +7 hits. Foe is stunned and unable to parry for 2 rounds while regaining bearings.	Elbow strike numbs foe's forearm. +8 hits. Foe drops his weapon and is stunned and unable to parry 2 rounds.	Knee strike knocks foe down. +9 hits. Foe is at -80 due to broken knee and is stunned and unable to parry 3 rounds.	Hard hit strike. If foe has helm, he is knocked back 10 feet and stunned for 6 rounds. If not, foe is knocked out for 24 hours.	Foe is knocked down and is unconscious. +30 hits.
67-70	Chest strike unbalances foe. +6 hits. Foe is unbalanced and fights at -50 for 2 rounds.	Blow to foe's chest. +7 hits. Confused foe is stunned and unable to parry next round.	Strike to chest. Foe is at -20 due to broken ribs. +8 hits. Foe is stunned fo 2 rounds.	Shoulder strike spins foe. +10 hits. Foe is at -25 due to a broken collar bone and is stunned and unable to parry next round.	Shoulder blast knocks foe down. Foe is stunned and unable to parry for 2 rounds and is at -10 due to minor fracture.
71-75	Blow to foe's lower leg. Foe is stunned for 2 rounds. +7 hits.	Blow bruises foe's calf. Foe is stunned next round. +9 hits. Foe is at -10.	Bruise foe's leg. +10 hits. Foe is stunned and unable to parry next round. Foe operates at -20.	Blow break foe's leg. Foe moves at -75. +12 hits. Foe is stunned and unable to parry next round.	Hard blow to foe's thigh knock foe down. +15 hits. Foe is stunned and unable to parry 3 rounds.
76-80	Blow to shield arm. If foe has a shield, it is torn away and +8 hits. If not, +12 hits and foe is stunned for 2 rnds.	Strike to foe's shield arm. Foe is stunned for 2 rounds and is knocked backwards 5 feet. +10 hits. Bruise — foe at -10.	Strike to foe's weapon arm. Foe is knocked back 5 feet and is stunned for 3 rounds. +11 hits. Mild fracture. Foe is at -25.	Strong blow to foe's weapon arm. Foe is knocked back 10 feet. +10 hits. Foe is at -25 and drops weapon. Foe is stunned for 3 rnds.	Strike to foe's shield arm. Foe stumbles back 3 feet and falls down. +15 hits. Foe is stunned and unable to parry for 4 rnds and is disarmed.
81-85	Side strike. +12 hits. Foe is stunned and unable to parry next round. Add +10 to your next roll.	Blow to foe's side. Foe is knocked sideways 3 feet and is stunned for 3 rounds. +15 hits.	Shot to side knocks foe 5 feet sideways. Foe drops anything carried in his shield hand (and any shield) and is stunned for 6 rounds.	Strike to foe's shield side knocks foe 5 feet sideways. Foe breaks ankle and falls down. Foe is at -50. +11 hits.	Awesome side shot sends foe tripping sideways. Foe breaks leg and rolls 5 feet. Foe is at -50, is stunned and unable to parry 6 rounds.
86-90	Blow to back. Foe stumbles 5 feet sideways and it stunned for 3 rounds. +13 hits. Add +20 to your next roll.	Strike to foe's back knocks foe sideways 10 feet. +12 hits. Foe is stunned and unable to parry for 2 rounds.	Precise back strike knocks foe down. Foe is disarmed and stunned for 6 rounds. +14 hits. Add +20 to your next roll.	Brutal back strike knocks foe down. +12 hits. Foe is disarmed and stunned and unable to parry for 4 rounds.	Cruel head strike... Foe sees stars. +20 hits. Foe is knocked 10 feet backwards and is stunned and unable to parry 12 rounds.
91-95	Head strike breaks foe's nose. If foe has helm, he is stunned 3 rounds. If not, foe is knocked out for at least 2 hours.	Blow to side of foe's head crushes ear area. Foe is stunned for 6 rounds. +9 hits. Foe is at -50 for 3 weeks .... impaired balance.	Side strike spins foe 10 feet sideways. Foe must roll on appropriate fumble table next 3 rounds. +8 hits.	Strike to foe's arm. If foe has shield, he loses it and take +10 hits. If not foe's arm is useless and he is stunned for 9 rounds.	Blow to foe's shield shoulder. If foe has shield, he is stunned 6 rounds. If not, he is knocked down, has a useless arm, passes out.
96-99	Nicely placed strike sends foe sprawling on his face. +10 hits. Foe is stunned and unable to parry for 3 rounds.	Side strike causes foe to ungracefully stumble to an embarrassing prone position. Foe in stunned and unable to parry 6 rounds.	Smooth and snazzy strike sends foe to his knees. If foe was using 1-hand weapon, it is thrown backwards 10 feet. Foe is stunned 24 hours.	Strike to foe's head sends him 10 feet backwards. If helmed, +9 hits, the helm is destroyed, and foe stunned 6 rnds. If not, foe is sent into coma for 4 weeks.	Pinpoint strike breaks foe's neck. Foe falls back 5 feet, spins, and stumbles to the ground. Foe dies of shock and suffocation in 3 rounds.
100	Brutal hip strike knocks foe down, tears tendon and shatters joint. Foe stunned and unable to parry for 9 hours. Leg useless, foe -90.	Inspired back strike sends foe flying 10 feet and onto his face. Severe nerve damage. Foe is paralyzed from waist down.	Upper chest strike knocks foe 10 feet sideways. Foe falls down and breaks both arms. Foe is sent into a 2 month coma.	Savage blow to foe's head knocks foe down. Foe falls into coma and dies in 12 rounds due to severed vein. Add +20 next roll.	Frightening strike to foe's temple knocks foe back 20 feet. Foe dies instantly. Add +20 to your next 3 rolls. Be kind now.

TABLE 12 - LARGE CREATURE CRITICAL STRIKE TABLE   CLAW LAW

	MELEE	PROJECTILE	ENERGY	EXPLOSIVES	SLAYING
01-05	+12 hits your weapon breaks. You are upset.	+15 hits you fumble your weapon and must parry next round. Good luck pal.	+18 hits you move poorly and yield the initiative next round.	+20 hits flat blow. Subtract 10 from you next swing.	+5 hits.
06-10	+3 hits.	+4 hits.	+5 hits.	+9 hits.	+10 hits.
11-20	+6 hits.	+8 hits.	+9 hits.	+12 hits.	+15 hits.
21-30	+9 hits.	+10 hits.	+12 hits.	+15 hits.	+20 hits.
31-40	+12 hits.	+15 hits.	+20 hits.	+25 hits.	+30 hits.
41-50	+15 hits.	+18 hits.	+25 hits.	+30 hits.	Light wound. +12 hits. Foe takes 5 hits per rnd and is forced to parry 1 rnd. Add +10 to your next swing.
51-65	+20 hits.	+25 hits.	+30 hits.	Light wound. +10 hits. Foe takes 3 hits per round and is forced to parry next round. You have initiative for 3 rounds.	Hard flat swing. +15 hits and foe is staggered. Foe is stunned and unable to parry for the next round.
66	Well placed strike to foe's neck severs the juglar vein. +15 hits. Foe dies in 6 rounds, and is inactive until then.	Vicious strike to abdomenal region destroys a variety of important organs. Foe drops and dies in 3 rounds. +30 hits.	Strike to foe's heart. +12 hits and foe dies instantly. Add +10 to your next swing. Very clean kill.	Inspired strike that catches foe between the eyes. +20 hits. Foe dies instantly. You have 1/2 a round left to act.	Strike through foe's ear destroys brain. Foe dies immediately. Add +10 to all friends' swings next round.
67-70	+25 hits.	+30 hits.	Light wound. +15 hits. Foe is stunned for 2 rounds and fights at -20. Add +10 to your next swing.	Hard strike. +20 hits. Foe is stunned and unable to parry for 2 rounds. Add +10 to your next swing.	Brutal strike through foe's heart. +20 hits. Foe dies immediately. Add +10 to your next swing.
71-80	+30 hits.	Light wound. +13 hits. Foe is stunned for 3 rounds and is unable to parry for the next round.	Hard blow. +20 hits. Foe is stunned and unable to parry for 2 rounds. Foe takes 3 hits per round due to light wound.	Strike to foe's leg. +9 hits. Foe is stunned and unable to parry for 1 round. Foe is at -10, takes 3 hits per round.	Shatter shoulder in foe's weapon arm. +15 hits. Foe is stunned for 3 rounds. Arm is quite useless.
81-90	Strong blast staggers foe. +20 hits. Foe is stunned and unable to parry for 2 rounds. Add +5 to next swing.	Hard blow stuns foe for 3 rounds. Foe is unable to parry next round. +22 hits. Add +10 to your next swing.	Strike to foe's leg. +15 hits. Foe is stunned for 2 rounds and fights at -20. Foe takes 2 hits per round.	Strike to foe's forehead. If foe has no helm, you kill him. if foe has a helm, you knock him out. +30 hits.	Strike to foe's chest destroys the heart. +25 hits. Foe dies immediately. Add +15 to your next swing.
91-95	Fine strike to foe's leg yields +18 hits. Foe takes 5 hits per round and is at -10. Foe is stunned for 3 rounds.	Strike foe in face. +5 hits. Foe takes 3 hits per round and fights at -25. Add +20 to your next swing.	Strike foe in head. +30 hits and foe is knocked out. Add +10 to all friendly swings next round. Fine shot.	Cruel strike to foe's chest severs a vein. Foe is stunned for 2 rounds, falls into unconsciousness, then dies after 6 rounds.	Sever an artery in foe's leg. +10 hits. Foe dies after 12 sad rounds of inactivity.
96-98	Strike foe in heart. Foe dies instantly and falls upon you. You then take 20 hits and are pinned for 6 rounds.	Strike foe through both lungs. Foe dies in 3 rounds. Your weapon is stuck in foe for 12 rounds. +25 hits.	Strike foe in nose and drive bone into brain. Foe dies instantly and you have a half round to act. Clean kill.	Strike through foe's ear drops sucker. +15 hits. Foe dies next rnd. Add +25 to your next swing.	Shatter foe's skull. +30 hits. Foe dies instantly. A piece of foe's skull sails straight back to 10 feet. Not pretty.
99-100	Strike through foe's lungs. Foe falls down and dies after 6 rnds. +24 hits. Add +20 to all friendly swings next rnd.	Hard but flat strike. Foe takes +35 hits, is stunned for 1 rnd, and is unable to parry. Your weapon breaks in half.	Strike foe in neck. +20 hits Foe is stunned and unable to parry for 6 rounds -- then dies. Your weapon is stuck 2 rounds.	Blind for cleanly. Foe is stunned and unable to parry for 2 rounds. +5 hits. Foe is at -100. Precision surgery.	Strike foe through cheek. Foe dies immediately. +15 hits. Unfortunately, your weapon is stuck in the bone for 2 rounds.
101-150	Awesome strike. +50 hits. Foe is stunned for 3 rounds and is unable to parry. Foe fights at -25.	Strike to side of foe's head knocks foe out. +20 hits. Foe is out for at least 3 hours. Add +10 to your next swing.	Strike to foe's chin shatters jaw and knocks foe out. +60 hits and foe is in a coma foe 30 days.	Shatter foe's knee. Foe takes 2 hits per round, fights at -30, and is stunned for 3 rounds.	Sever a vein in foe's forelimb. Foe is stunned and unable to parry for 6 rounds. Foe then falls dead. +20 hits.
151-175	Strike drives bone into kidneys and liver. Foe falls, taking 40 hits. Foe then dies...pity.	Strike drives shattered remnants of foe's jaw into the brain. Foe dies instantly. You have 1/2 round left to act.	Strike to foe's abdomen destroys a variety of important organs. Foe drops and dies after 6 rounds. +30 hits.	Smooth strike through foe's cheek. +10 hits. Foe dies immediately. You have a half round left in which to act.	Strike through foe's neck. Foe dies instantly. +25 hits. Add +10 to your next swing. Fine piece of work.
176-200	Strike to bowels destroys foe's adomenal areas. Foe falls and dies after 12 rounds. +35 hits. Add +15 to your next swing.	Strike through foe's ear kills foe with clean ease. +10 hits. Add +20 to the swings of all nearby allies next round.	Strike severs and artery in foe's leg. Foe fights at -20 for 2 rnds, then drops. Foe is then inactive and dies after 6 rounds.	Strike severs foe's spine. +20 hits. Foe drops immediately and is paralyzed from the waist down.	Strike foe through the eye. Foe dies immediately. +15 hits. Add 20 to your next swing. You have a half round to act.
201-250	Blow to foe's forelimb severs a vein and stuns foe for 6 rounds. Foe drops on round 7, passes out, then dies. +15 hits.	Strike severs foe's spine. +15 hits. Foe is paralyzed from the neck down. Sadly, your weapon breaks in half.	Strike to foe's heart. +20 hits foe dies instantly. Add +15 to all friendly swings for the next 2 rounds of action.	Strike to foe's heart. +25 hits. Foe dies. Add +20 to all friendly swings for the next 3 rounds of action.	Strike carries all the way through foe's head. Foe dies instantly. The action carries onto any nearby opponent (this round.)
251+	Extremely hard but flat swing. +35 hits. Foe is stunned and unable to parry for 3 rounds. Unfortunately, you knock yourself out.	Strike through foe's eye proves fatal. Foe dies immmediately. +20 hits. Add +25 to your next swing.	Blind foe with vicious crossing strike. Foe is at -100 and is upset. +10 hits and foe is quite stunned for 6 rounds.	Strike through foe's ribs punctures a lung. +30 hits. Foe is knocked out. Your weapon is stuck for 6 rounds. Good luck.	Blind foe with precision strike across eyes. +6 hits. Foe is stunned and unable to parry for 24 rounds.

	MELEE	PROJECTILE	ENERGY	EXPLOSIVES	SLAYING
01-05	+10 hits, but your weapon breaks in half. Shoddy workmanship.	+10 hits, but you drop your weapon and it will take 2 rnds to get it back. Bum luck buddy.	+10 hits, but you fumble your weapon for remainder of round. You are stunned next round.	+10 hits, but you fumble your weapon for remainder of round. You must parry next round... at -5.	+10 hits, but you must parry next round.
06-10	+2 hits.	+3 hits.	+4 hits.	+6 hits.	+8 hits.
11-20	+3 hits.	+4 hits.	+5 hits.	+8 hits.	+10 hits.
21-30	+4 hits.	+5 hits.	+6 hits.	+10 hits.	+12 hits.
31-40	+5 hits.	+6 hits.	+7 hits.	+12 hits.	+15 hits.
41-50	+6 hits.	+7 hits.	+8 hits.	+15 hits.	+18 hits.
51-65	+7 hits.	+8 hits.	+9 hits.	+18 hits.	+20 hits.
66	+20 hits.	Blow gives foe light wound. +12 hits. Foe takes 3 hits for round and fights -10. Your weapon breaks.	Blow gives foe light wound. +15 hits foe takes 5 hits per round, fights -10, and yields initiative next round.	Heavy wound. +20 hits. Foe is stunned and unable to parry next round. Foe fights -15 and takes 10 hits per round.	Strike foe's heart and kill sucker. Add +20 to your next swing you are, however, covered with foe's blood. +50 hits.
67-70	+8 hits.	+9 hits.	+10 hits.	+20 hits.	Heavy blow breaks bones in foe's upper body. +30 hits. Foe is stunned and unable to parry for 2 rounds. Flat strike.
71-80	+9 hits.	+10 hits.	+15 hits.	Light wound. +13 hits. Foe takes 5 hits per round, fights -10, and yields the initiative. Add +10 to your next swing.	Hard blow. +24 hits and foe fights at -20. Foe is stunned for 3 rounds and unable to parry. Foe takes 5 hits per round.
81-90	+10 hits.	+15 hits.	+20 hits.	Light wound. +12 hits. Foe takes 4 hits per round and must parry next round. Add +20 to your next round.	Heavy wound. Foe is stunned and unable to parry for 3 rnds. Foe takes 20 hits per round and fights at -25. +25 hits.
91-95	+15 hits.	+20 hits.	Light wound. +12 hits. Foe takes 4 hits per round and you have the initiative next 2 rounds. Add +10 next swing.	Hard blow. +25 hits. Foe is stunned for 2 rounds and is unable to parry next round. Foe takes 3 hits per round.	Strike to foe's neck severs a variety of blood vessels and knocks foe down. Foe expires in 3 rounds due to shock. +35 hits. Nice...
96-98	Blow severs vein and artery. Foe is stunned for 12 rounds, drops, then dies. Awesome.	Massive blow to neck crushes bone and breaks spine. Foe dies in 1 round, but drops instantly. Add +25 to next swing.	Blow to lower skull area kills foe instantly. Foe staggers for 1 round before dropping. Add +20 to your next swing.	You cut foe's skull in half. Weapon is stuck in carnage for 6 rounds. Add +10 to all friendly swings for 6 rounds.	Strike drives bone through Foe's heart. Foe dies instantly, but your weapon is stuck in foe for 12 rounds. +40 hits.
99-100	Blow shatters bone. +30 hits and 10 hits per round due to compound fracture. Foe is at -25.	Strike foe in leg and sever vein. +25 hits. Foe drops in 2 rounds and dies. Foe can fight in the interim.	Crush bones in Foe's neck. 50% chance foe is paralyzed from neck down. 50% chance that foe is killed. You have a half round left to act.	Strike through heart kills foe. +20 hits. 25% chance foe falls on you out of spite.	Catch foe between the eyes and shatter the skull. Foe dies instantly. You have a half round to act. Add +25 to your next swing.
101-150	Light wound. +12 hits. Foe bleeds at 1 hit per round. Add +10 to your next swing.	Light wound. +13 hits and foe must parry next round. Foe takes 2 hits per round. Add +20 to your next swing.	Hard blow. +30 hits. Foe is stunned for 3 rounds and is unable to parry during next round. Add +10 to your next swing.	Serious compound fracture. +30 hits and foe is stunned, unable to parry, for 2 rounds.	Strike foe through leg and sever vein. Foe is stunned and unable to parry for 6 rounds. Foe then dies. +20 hits.
151-175	Blow cuts muscle and causes light wound. +20 hits. Foe is at -20 and takes 5 hits per round.	Blow stuns foe for 1 round and foe is unable to parry. +25 hits. Foe is at -20 and is quite upset.	Knock foe down. +25 hits. Foe is down and unable to parry for next 2 rounds. Add +10 to your next swing.	Knock foe down with a vicious blow. +40 hits. 50% chance of coma -- 50% chance foe is down and unable to parry 6 rounds.	Awesome blow knocks foe down. Foe breaks back and neck and suffocates in 12 rounds. +25 hits. Add +20 to your next swing.
176-200	Blow cuts tendons. +15 hits and Foe fights -25. Add +20 to your next swing.	Knock foe down. +20 hits. Foe is down for 2 rounds and unable to parry. Add +25 to your next swing.	Heavy wound. +28 hits and foe is at -40. Foe is unable to parry and stunned for next 3 rounds. Foe takes 10 hits per round.	Strike severs vast number of blood vessels. +25 hits and foe is stunned, unable to parry, for 9 rounds. Foe is at - 25.	Strike through foe's eye hits home and rips through brain. +24 hits. Foe drops immediately and dies. Fine blast.
201-250	Blow shatters bone. +35 hits. Foe takes 10 hits per round, is stunned 2 rounds, and fights at -30.	Heavy wound. +35 hits and foe is stunned for 3 rounds, unable to parry. Foe fights at -40 and takes 10 hits per round.	Vicious blow to foe's leg. Foe takes 12 hits per round and fights at -50. Foe is stunned and unable to parry for 6 rounds. +30 hits.	Strike through foe's ear. +15 hits. Foe dies of massive brain damage in 3 rounds. Add +20 to your next swing.	Magnificent abdomenal strike drops foe in a heap. +35 hits and foe dies of shock in 4 rounds. You are stunned next round.
251+	Foe is blinded. +20 hits and foe fights at -100. Foe is stunned and unable to parry for 6 rounds.	Strike through foe's eye. You kill foe instantly. Add +20 to your next swing. 20% chance your weapon is stuck in foe for 3 rounds.	Awe inspiring strike drives bone through both lungs. Foe takes 100 hits, falls in a coma, and dies in 18 rounds.	Incredible strike severs an artery and vein and breaks foe's spine. +50 hits, falls, and dies after 2 rounds of agony.	Strike through side kills foe after a chain reaction of broken bones splinter. You are covered with foe's blood. +100 hits.

Notes

Notes

ALIEN RACE AND CREATURE INDEX

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Aliens & Artifacts finally brings two important aspects of sci-fi gaming to the *Space Master* game universe: Alien Beasts and Alien Technology. Now your *Space Master* characters can visit outlandish worlds crawling with unheard of animals and harboring strange relics of the past and present.

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