

LEGENDARY PLANET

A dramatic illustration of a large, blue, scaly dragon breathing a powerful stream of fire. The dragon's head is in the upper left, with its mouth wide open, and the fire extends towards the bottom right. In the bottom right corner, a man in a dark spacesuit with a helmet is shown in a dynamic pose, looking back over his shoulder with a determined expression. The background is a dark space filled with stars and a large, pale moon in the upper right. The entire scene is framed by a decorative orange and black border.

DEAD VAULT DESCENT

BY MATT GOODALL

STARFINDER
COMPATIBLE

A person wearing a red jumpsuit is shown from the waist up, splashing in water. Their arms are raised in the air, and water droplets are frozen around them, creating a dynamic, action-oriented scene. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue and white, suggesting an outdoor aquatic setting.

DEAD VAULT DESCENT

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Dead Vault Descent follows the heroes of the Legendary Planet Adventure Path as they continue their search for a way home. Emerging from the events of *The Scavenged Codex*, your heroes use their newfound knowledge and a daring heist from the dangerous Thanex Coterie to reactivate a long dormant interplanetary gate. Traveling to the lost world of Kylorn, a tidally locked planet half scorched by eternal sunshine, half frozen by endless darkness, they must descend into the dead vaults beneath the planet's surface and travel from the frozen dark side of the planet through the picturesque sunset lands to the burning inferno of the scorching Daylands in search of Kylorn's primary portal. Along the way, they must face lethal sentient automatons and deathless undead legions locked in a perpetual war for centuries, while shapeshifting assassins, powerful guardians, and the deadly extremes of the planet itself promise death or glory to the PCs on their *Dead Vault Descent*!

This adventure continues on from *The Scavenged Codex* with the assumption that the PCs have already experienced that adventure and those previous. Their mythic powers continue to grow, as does their stature as players to be respected on the interplanetary stage, as they reach out into a wide and dangerous cosmos in search of a way back to their home world. *Dead Vault Descent* brings the PCs to a different kind of planet from the crossroads world of Argosa or the desert wastes and verdant oases of Rythes. Kylorn is a world that is largely inhospitable to living things, where they must cling to survival in a narrow fringe of the world while the dominant creatures of the world engage in a war without death whose ultimate end may be a world without life. Safety and comfort are rare and precious on Kylorn, yet the PCs offer hope to living survivors and a break in the stalemate between unliving rivals that may yet offer peace to a broken world even as your heroes just try to survive.

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Neil

DEAD VAULT DESCENT

Flush with newfound knowledge of the multiverse-spanning Weave, the off-world victims of an alien abduction must once again seek an interstellar gate capable of taking them home. This time their journey turns to the lost world of Kylorn, a tidally-locked planet half-scorched by eternal sun and half-frozen by endless darkness. Can the PCs change Kylorn's stand-still fate to chart a new way home? Or will they perish at the grisly end of a *Dead Vault Descent*?

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Long ago, the ancient Patron civilization nurtured and developed many worlds, especially those occupying strategic positions across the multiverse which could expand their ever-growing Weave. A hub planet called Kylorn drew their attention in the earliest days of expansion, and they built a massive, multicultural society there by uplifting and inviting other species to join them. As a result, when war eventually arose between the Patrons and their malicious enemies known as the Principalities, Kylorn proved a tempting target, suffering repeated attacks. But the Principalities struggled to conquer the planet by sheer force, and had to settle for a much longer war of attrition, deploying bioweapons and untold horrors across the surface to make Kylorn uninhabitable. These dangers drove the Patrons and their allies deep underground, forcing them to shelter in vast vaults which held much of their civilization's lore. Connected by miles of tunnels, these vaults survived by supporting one another in an ongoing effort to outlast their attackers and keep Patron technology out of the hands of the Principalities.

Unable to penetrate the entrenched positions of the Patron vaults, the Principalities eventually used one of their most powerful weapons in an act of sheer spite, exerting a gravitational force to stop Kylorn's rotation. This action immediately limited the reach and orientation of its planetary gates, preventing the Patrons from receiving further aid and reinforcements. The ecological damage also doomed any remaining resistance on the planet's surface at the cost of rendering the planet useless to the Principalities—a scorched earth tactic before they moved on to seize other worlds from the Patrons. On Kylorn, this act of devastation became known as the End of Time, for it quite literally eliminated the cycle of day and night while also putting immense pressure on the surviving population as each vault's resources ran low.

With the Principalities gone, the remaining Patrons on Kylorn sought to redirect a handful of their planetary gates to lead their surviving allies to safety, but misalignments caused most of the portals to no longer function. The few that did only led to uncharted worlds—many with incompatible environments—or planets which had already fallen to Principality occupation. The Patrons also feared that

using the remaining gates could lead their enemies back to Kylorn with more direct access into the vaults. So, in the end, the Patrons instructed their followers to keep the archives safe while they took on the risk of crossing the Weave to reestablish contact with their own kind. Unfortunately, those Patrons fell victim to the interstellar war and failed to return—an outcome which created vast uncertainty and doubt among those who had loyally remained behind.

As a result, Kylorn's remaining population soon faced planet-wide extinction. Unable to subsist on the limited ecosystems of the vaults, they argued among themselves on how to survive and still keep their commitment to protect the Patron archives. Some chose to transfer their consciousness into artificial bodies, joining with other constructs created by the Patrons to form a sterile society no longer dependent on food and water—becoming known as the Servitors. Others followed the dread command of their ruling Empress Zefora by sacrificing themselves in necromantic rituals to become undead—a vain, desperate act which formed a mostly evil faction now called the Undying. For thousands of years these groups came into conflict with one another, each laying claim to portions of the Patron archives and overall legacy. The Servitors eventually drove the Undying out of the greater vaults and into the tunnels below the sun-blasted wastes on the far side of the planet. And, in so doing, they took up guardianship of the remaining planetary gates on the cold side of Kylorn, ever watchful for the return of the Principalities and the Patrons.

Once again, thousands of years passed. After much deliberation, a leading paragon among the Servitors convinced the others they should resume the work of the Patrons by seeding the surface of Kylorn with the genetic material that encourages sentient life. This activity gave them renewed purpose, and they unlocked one of the ancient vaults holding the proto-material capable of evolving such lifeforms. They then tapped this resource to populate the narrow habitability zone between the two extremes of the planet's surface—a location now called the Sunset Lands. This genesis-like event slowly evolved a host of flora and fauna from which a sentient people emerged to find their own ecological footing. The Servitors then embraced the familiar role espoused by the Patrons to nurture these new natives, unaware that their genesis also brought renewed interest to Kylorn. The Undying soon found their way to the same Sunset Lands occupied by the new species, often satisfying their bloodlust by secretly abducting and feeding upon them like cattle. Likewise, ancient devices left behind by the Principalities activated upon detecting sentient activity on the planet's surface again. It took several generations for these messages to reach the Ultari Hegemony, but once the children of the Principalities heard them, they dispatched scouts to investigate. These agents inevitably came into conflict with the Servitors upon emerging from the long dormant gates of Kylorn. But, in time, they won their way past some of the guardians, determined to invade the ancient vaults and reap the stores of knowledge left behind by the

Patrons. The Hegemony's efforts have taken a long time, and their leaders have grown increasingly concerned with the lack of success in breaching the greater underground vaults. Only recently have they been able to turn some of the Patrons' lesser clockwork creations—autonomous constructs envious of the Servitors' control—to their cause.

Unaware of the current power struggle taking place on Kylorn, the leaders of the Bellianic Accord have their own reasons for turning their attention to the planet. On the heels of the PCs' success in retrieving the *Opus Aeterna* from the planet Rythes in *The Scavenged Codex*, the Accord's leaders have identified the strategic importance represented by the Patron vaults on Kylorn and hope to access them so they too can use their lore to turn the tide against the Hegemony. Fortunately, a long dormant gate on Argosa can be adjusted to reach Kylorn despite the planet's stopped rotation, and the Accord hopes the knowledge from the *Opus Aeterna* can reopen it. This gate currently resides within a compound controlled by the most powerful Coterie in Zel-Argose—the Thanex Coterie. Thus, an old friend in the Accord—the elali seer Relstanna—contacts the PCs to request their assistance in accessing the Thanex compound, reactivating the gate to Kylorn, and exploring the Patron vaults. She also informs them of an even more compelling reason to lend their aid. The star maps contained in the *Opus Aeterna* also indicate Kylorn holds a planetary gate which could lead directly back to their homeworld. If the PCs still want to rejoin their loved ones by returning home, this may be their best chance.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

With knowledge obtained from the *Opus Aeterna* in *The Scavenged Codex*, the PCs reopen a dormant path across the Weave to Kylorn in an attempt to find another way home. The only gate leading from Argosa to Kylorn is an inactive portal owned by the Thanex Coterie, but many constructs guard the warehouse sheltering this gate. After using stealth, subterfuge, or simple brute force to access the warehouse, the PCs reactivate the gate and venture to Kylorn.

The PCs arrive on the surface of Kylorn on the planet's cold night side where the gate is sustaining a compatible environment around itself. This oasis has only a limited range, however, and the PCs have to quickly make their way underground to avoid the tremendous environmental hazards they'd endure by travelling overland. Below ground, the PCs discover a network of subterranean vaults and passageways, as well as a secret base leading to the control center for the gateway.

Examining the gate controls reveals that this is a secondary portal, which relies on the planet's primary gate. Kylorn's gates are centrally regulated by the world's primary gate, each gate can open independently but can only have its destination coordinates changed or realigned at the primary gate. This security measure was implemented during the ancient war to prevent the enemy from overrunning a gate and then resetting its destination to bring in overwhelming reinforcements. Kylorn's stopped rotation now means that

most gates only align with their destinations intermittently, approximately once every couple of months and even then only for around an hour or so. With the knowledge the PCs possess, they can manually re-attune a gate's destination but this is only a temporary measure as the destination coordinates slowly shift out of alignment by themselves. What needs to happen is to permanently recalibrate each Kylorn's gates to compensate for the world's lack of rotation by updating the planet's primary gate to reflect this new status.

This means that the primary gate must still be working and that the PCs need to get to this gate to complete their mission. The PCs find a system of tunnels and magically levitating 'trains' that greatly speed their journey across the planet and gets them closer to the main gate.

The tunnels lead to Kylorn's habitability zone and the Sunset lands, where the PCs return to the surface and learn a little about the world they are traveling across. Encountering the lavender skinned natives of Kylorn, the PCs receive directions to the Citadel of the Oracle, a place of learning that may have answers to their questions concerning the location of the primary gate. At the Citadel, the PCs discover that the place has been raided by a group of Hegemony agents who have stolen genetic code samples from the Citadel's vaults. The underground areas of the Citadel have been taken over by a group of hostile intelligent constructs and the PCs need to defeat them to rescue the Oracle. Once free, Pionesis the divymm oracle offers the PCs her assistance. She accesses the Citadel's records and confirms that the planet's primary gate is underneath the harsh burning day side of the planet and that the only way to access it is through the Palace of the Undying Empress.

The PCs journey to the Palace which sits high on a ridge at the edge of the Daylands. Here they must venture into the haunted palace and confront Empress Zefora to gain access to the tunnel leading to the gate. Permanently defeating the lich empress requires the PCs to find and destroy her phylactery as well as facing her in battle. The PCs may find clues to where Zefora hides her phylactery from her scheming undead 'daughters' who all secretly desire the empress's death.

After descending beneath the palace, the PCs again travel great distances via another set of levitating transportation devices to the day side of the planet. The area where the gate sits is deep underground in a scorching area of the planet's crust located close to an active volcano. This area is subject to tremendous earthquakes and seismic activity generated by the volcanic area around it. The PCs are ambushed by the team of hetzuuds, who are struggling to get through a massive portal into the gate complex. Powerful elementals reign here, subservient and respectful toward a young dragon named Cilraska. She is using the main gate as a gate to the depths of space, where she ranges over a wide nebula. While not evil, she opposes any interference with the gate which she regards as hers. She presents a formidable combat challenge for the PCs. Ultimately, the PCs find the ancient gate they seek. But, it is no longer aligned with the path they'd need to follow. The PCs must return to Zel-Argose and on to the next adventure in the *Legendary Planet* adventure path.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

Designed for four 8th-level PCs, *Dead Vault Descent* continues the Legendary Planet Adventure Path by picking up the storyline established in Chapter 2 with *The Scavenged Codex*. As your PCs gain legendary feats, it's strongly suggested that you advance them according to the track rather than XP. Otherwise, their increased power will bring them to 20th level substantially before the end of the Legendary Planet Adventure Path.

PCs should be at least 8th level at the start of this adventure and have just gained their first legendary feat. They should then reach 9th level and have gained another feat by the time they reach the Citadel of the Oracle. After adventuring through the Sunset Lands and entering the palace of Empress Zefora, they should be 10th level. Then, in Part Four, the PCs should reach 11th level by the end of the adventure.

PART ONE: THE THANEX CAPER

In the time between adventures, perhaps as a side effect of their exposure to the Red Gate or perhaps as part of their continued study of the *Opus Aeterna*, the PCs each gain the Legendary Surge feat (see pg. 94) as a bonus feat. As this is their first legendary feat, be sure to take time to explain that legendary feats are a special reward and cannot be taken using normal feat slots.

Having recovered the *Opus Aeterna*, the PCs now possess the necessary insight to repair and possibly even realign interplanetary gates. The PCs' elali contact, Relstanna, offers her council, reminding them that all gates on Argosa are under the control of various coterie and other factions who are extremely unlikely to allow the PCs to interfere with their operation. However, accessing a non-functional gate—even one belonging to the Thanex Coterie—should prove easier.

This gate has been disabled for over three hundred years. At that time the Hegemony was menacing Zel-Argose and its Peerage of Coterie, seeking to force them to capitulate under the threat of invasion. The Thanex Coterie sacrificed one of the three gates in their possession as a warning that the Coterie possessed the means to destroy gates and would willingly do so to maintain their power and independence.

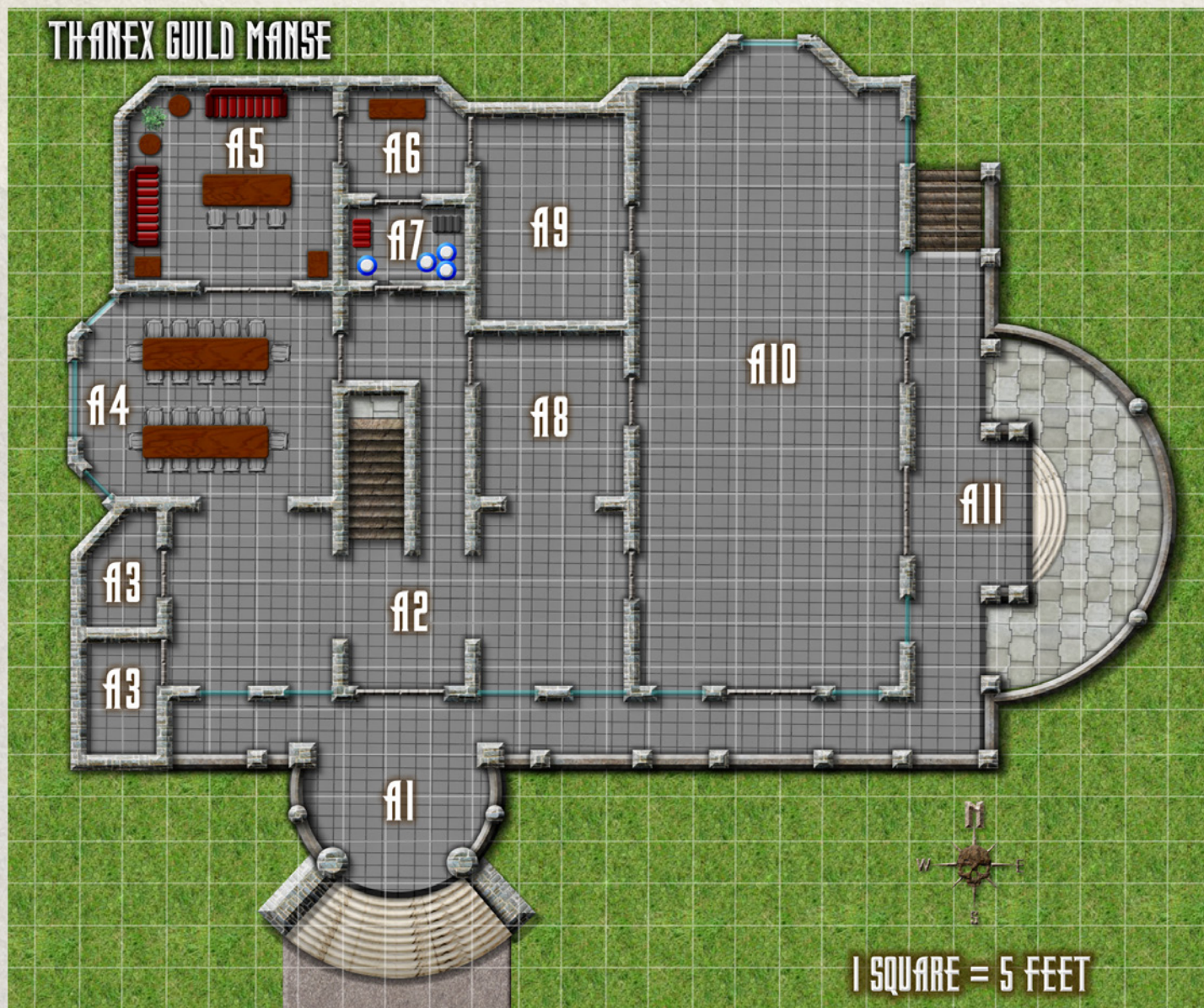
The Midnight Gate resides in one of their less heavily guarded storage compounds in the northeastern part of Zel-Argose, but requires a specific component that was removed when the coterie deactivated it as a show of force to stave off a Hegemony invasion nearly centuries ago. This component now sits in a display case as part of an exhibit in a Thanex reception hall, and the PCs will need to retrieve it and reinstall it before the gate can be made operable again.

Relstanna points out that attempting to negotiate with the Thanex Coterie for the component, or even their use of the gate, is unlikely to secure their assistance. Thanex is one of the most powerful and ruthless coterie in the city, and the purposeful deactivation of the gate serves as a constant reminder for the Ultari Hegemony to honor Argosa's neutrality in their ongoing war with the Bellianic Accord. Even suggesting the gate can be made operable again would draw Thanex scrutiny into how such a thing is possible, no doubt giving rise to the existence of the *Opus Aeterna* becoming public knowledge. In addition, Relstanna suspects Hegemony agents may have infiltrated the Thanex ranks, and they would quickly report the PCs' intentions to their masters. As a result, she recommends they use subterfuge to access the Thanex reception hall, retrieve the gate's vital component, and then infiltrate the nearby warehouse that houses the gate so they can repair and access it.

PLANNING THE HEIST

Relstanna can give directions to the Thanex Guild Manse, but anyone can learn the same with a DC 15 Culture check. The PCs can easily walk by the location, a large mansion situated on an acre of lawns and manicured gardens (approximately 180 feet wide and 250 feet long), surrounded by a 20-foot-high stone wall. Figuring out how to infiltrate the building and locate the missing component requires investigation and planning, as does formulating a scheme to retrieve it without alerting the Thanex before the PCs have a chance to take the component to the deactivated gate and effect a repair. The following section details the situation as a heist, which presents the situation as a set of challenges that must be overcome by the PCs, and which can be approached in a number of different ways. Which tactics they choose may be predicated on the specific characters in the party and their abilities, but planning the heist should involve all of the players. Be aware that the PCs may need to split up to most effectively infiltrate the Guild Manse, and in that case you must compartmentalize the action, switching back and forth between different groups as they face their separate obstacles.

Running a heist requires more narrative momentum than a combat-heavy encounter, and you don't want PCs to hit a dead end in their investigation or negotiation. If a particular negotiation requires multiple skill checks and some succeed while some fail, or if PCs fail an individual skill check by less than 5, you might allow the PCs to have a partial success that may give them partial information or clues, or gets them what they need but with a delay to wait for another character or some other complication. Perhaps their investigation is noticed by others, including guards who might challenge them or other NPCs who might try to divert their attention to something other than their intended mission or who might threaten to reveal them to the target of their investigation.



INVESTIGATION AND RECONNAISSANCE

Before PCs move on the Guild Manse, they may investigate the location and the Thanex with friends and allies, or by gathering information elsewhere in Zel-Argose, in order to gain useful knowledge about the Thanex and how the Guild Manse is protected. The walls prevent easy surveillance, and any creature climbing the wall is likely to be shot by night watch guards patrolling the grounds. Tiny or smaller creatures, including drones, might be ignored if they appear atop the wall or fly overhead briefly and then depart, but the guards are fairly observant (Perception +7) and if they see the same creature return frequently they are more likely to attack and try to kill or capture it.

Neutral Ground: The Thanex Manse is declared as neutral ground for the soiree, with weapons, spell gems, and explosives forbidden except for the guards. A character wishing to hide a small weapon on her person must succeed at a DC 25 Stealth

check or DC 20 Sleight of Hand check to hide the item. Weapons with the *glamered* fusion can be worn, and items hidden within a *null-space chamber* can be carried with no concern. Characters wishing to disguise themselves as an innocuous servant, loyal guard, or even an unobtrusive partygoer while smuggling in magical items or with active spells should consider protecting themselves from divinations, as several guests and staff have access to *detect magic*.

Over the Walls: Getting a look inside the walls requires flight or climbing the wall (Athletics DC 20), or the use of spells like *clauraudience/clairvoyance*. A creature observing the grounds must succeed at at least three DC 20 Perception checks, each taking 1d6 rounds, and a visible observer must succeed at a Stealth check with a DC of 20 plus the number of rounds spent observing. If spotted, one guard will come investigate while his partner waits and observes, ready to sound an alarm if something happens to his partner.

PART 1: THE THANEX CAPER

Success on three checks reveals the type of guards and their general rotation of work. It does not reveal the nature of guards inside the Manse, though exceeding the DC by 5 on at least two checks reveals that there are at least two people inside the Manse.

What Does the Component Look Like? The component from the Thanex gate mechanism should be a set of jointed metallic rods connected by circuit cables and conduits. The PCs have seen active gates in their travels in previous adventures and so can recognize the kind of magical technology involved. The component should radiate conjuration magic.

Who's In Charge? PCs may try to find out who the key players are at the Thanex Coterie. A successful DC 15 Culture check reveals that **Tyreene Thanex** is the public face of the Coterie; however, a result exceeding the DC by 5 reveals that she is not to the true master of the Coterie, and that an ambitious half-elf named **Revelle Chax** is believed to be an up-and-coming rival who may unseat her. Exceeding the DC by 10 reveals that the half-elf **Tyrilious Tindal** is the secret lover of Tyreene Thanex, and while nepotism is nothing new he is considered a liability by rivals in the Coterie a pretentious and arrogant dilettante more interested in impressing his socialite friends than ruthlessly promoting the business of the Coterie, and his soft-headed thinking has been dragged Tyreene down with him.



BREAKING AND ENTERING (CR 11)

Some PCs may want to take the most direct approach: once the building is located, simply break in and search the place until the item is found. This approach has the advantage of speed, but is fraught with the most danger, as the grounds surrounding the Guild Manse are guarded by regular patrols accompanied by trained velociraptors used to sniff out hidden or invisible creatures. The Watch Master and Keeper patrol inside the building along with one pair of the night watch and their raptors. The other three night watch patrols comb the grounds for any sign of intruders.

Cover and Concealment on the Grounds: Decorative statuary and shrubbery are scattered around the grounds and provide possible sources of cover or concealment for making Stealth checks, and at any given time two of the three night watch patrols in the grounds will be hiding (Stealth +7) while keeping watch. PCs can potentially use these areas to hide as well, but the night watch are so familiar with these areas that they gain a +4 bonus to Perception checks to notice PCs hiding near them. You can place these areas randomly wherever desired in the yard, but each area should be no more than 10 to 15 feet across.

Diversions and Illusions: The raptors can be fooled by illusions, though illusions that lack a scent component (including *holographic image* spells below 3rd level) quickly rouse their suspicion and allow an automatic Will save to disbelieve them when the raptor is within 30 feet. They are trained to trill and bark to signal the night watch both when they sense invisible creatures (which they can smell and hear but not see) and illusions that they can see and hear but not smell.

WATCH MASTER IRAEBU

CR 6

XP 2,400

Female half-orc mystic

NE medium humanoid (human, orc)

Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +18

DEFENSE

HP 75

EAC 17; KAC 18

Fort +5; Ref +5; Will +9

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee tactical knife +10 (2d4+5 S)

Ranged red star plasma pistol +12 (1d8+5 E & F; critical burn 1d8)

Mystic Spells Known (CL 6th; melee +10, ranged +12)

3rd (3/day)—*speak with dead*, *suggestion* (DC 19)

2nd (6/day)—*fear* (DC 18), *hold person* (DC 18), *hurl forcedisk*,
see invisibility

1st (at will)—*detect thoughts* (DC 17), *share language*

0 (at will)—*telepathic message*

TACTICS

During Combat Iraebu patrols the interior of the Guild Manse, maintaining contact at all times with the night watch and Keeper Axater using *telepathic message*. If she notices combat,

she immediately alerts the other patrols and goes to support them, leaving Axater to guard the interior. If the raptors sense invisible creatures, she uses *see invisibility* to pinpoint their location.

STATISTICS

Str +0; **Dex** +3; **Con** +2; **Int** +0; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +5

Skills Culture +13, Intimidate +18, Survival +13

Languages Common, Orc

Gear elite stationwear, red star plasma pistol with 2 batteries (20 charges each), tactical knife

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Orc Ferocity (Ex): Once per day, a half-orc brought to 0 Hit Points but not killed can fight on for 1 more round. The half-orc drops to 0 HP and is dying (following the normal rules for death and dying) but can continue to act normally until the end of her next turn, when she becomes unconscious as normal. If she takes additional damage before this, she ceases to be able to act and falls unconscious.

KEEPER AXATER

CR 8

XP 4,800

Male half-orc operative

NE Medium humanoid (human, orc)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +16

Resistances sonic 5

DEFENSE

HP 115

EAC 20; KAC 21

Fort +7; **Ref** +11; **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee tactical knife +17 (2d4+4 S)

Ranged advanced semi-auto pistol +17 (2d6+4 P) or advanced shirren-eye rifle +17 (2d10+8 P)

Offensive Abilities death attack, trick attack +4d8

TACTICS

During Combat Axater is the Keeper of the Guild Manse and its last line of defense and first line of revenge. He observes any combats outside while remaining hidden within, studying any intruders so he will be ready to make a death attack should they venture into the building.

STATISTICS

Str +0; **Dex** +6; **Con** +0; **Int** +2; **Wis** +; **Cha** +4

Skills Acrobatics +21, Intimidate +21, Sense Motive +16, Stealth +21, Survival +16

Languages Common, Orc

Gear advanced lashunta tempweave (sonic dampener), advanced semi-auto pistol with 60 rounds, advanced shirren-eye rifle with 8 rounds, tactical knife

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Death Attack (Ex) After studying a target for three consecutive rounds as a full action, Axater can make a melee or ranged attack as a death attack. If this attack hits, it is automatically considered a critical hit. The target must also succeed at a DC 18 Fortitude save or be reduced to 0 Hit Points and o

Stamina Points. Characters with the Legendary Power feat can spend a legendary power point instead of losing Hit Points and Stamina Points.

Orc Ferocity (Ex): Once per day, a half-orc brought to 0 Hit Points but not killed can fight on for 1 more round. The half-orc drops to 0 HP and is dying (following the normal rules for death and dying) but can continue to act normally until the end of her next turn, when he becomes unconscious as normal. If he takes additional damage before this, he ceases to be able to act and falls unconscious.

NIGHT WATCH (8)

CR 3

XP 800 each

Half-orc soldier

NE Medium humanoid (human, orc)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +7

DEFENSE

HP 40 EACH

EAC 13; KAC 17

Fort +5; **Ref** +5; **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee thunderstrike pulse gauntlet +8 (1d8+3 B & So; critical knockdown)

Ranged frostbite-class zero rifle +11 (1d8+3 C; critical staggered [DC 12]) or flash grenade I +11 (explode [5 ft., blinded 1d4 rounds, DC 12])

TACTICS

During Combat The night watch patrol the grounds in pairs. If they spot PCs or if their velociraptor companions scent them, they release the dinosaurs to attack in melee while they attack from range and shout for help from the other night watch patrols, who arrive in 1d3–1 rounds. They use their grenades to blind targets while also calling attention to the scene of the fight.

STATISTICS

Str +2; **Dex** +4; **Con** +0; **Int** +0; **Wis** +1; **Cha** +0

Skills Intimidate +12, Sense Motive +7, Stealth +7

Languages Common, Orc

Gear squad defiance series, frostbite-class zero rifle with 2 batteries (20 charges each), thunderstrike pulse gauntlet with 1 battery (20 charges), flash grenades I (2)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Orc Ferocity (Ex): Once per day, a half-orc brought to 0 Hit Points but not killed can fight on for 1 more round. The half-orc drops to 0 HP and is dying (following the normal rules for death and dying) but can continue to act normally until the end of her next turn, when she becomes unconscious as normal. If she takes additional damage before this, she ceases to be able to act and falls unconscious.

VELOCIRAPTORS (8)

CR 2

XP 600 each

N Small animal

Init +4; **Senses** blindsight (scent) 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +12



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DEFENSE

HP 28 EACH

EAC 13; KAC 15

Fort +6; Ref +6; Will +1

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 60 ft.

Melee bite +10 (1d6+3 P) or talon +10 (1d6+3 S; critical bleed 1d4)

Offensive Abilities leaping charge

TACTICS

During Combat The raptors fight as their handlers direct them.

Morale The raptors will flee with their handlers, but fight to the death if their handlers are killed.

STATISTICS

Str +1; Dex +4; Con +2; Int -3; Wis +0; Cha +0

Skills Acrobatics +7, Stealth +12

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Leaping Charge (Ex) A velociraptor can jump while charging, allowing it to ignore difficult terrain when it charges. When a velociraptor makes a charge in this way, it deals double damage with its talon.

A SUBTLE SOIREE

If PCs choose to use subterfuge to plan a heist during the soiree, they can make plans for how best to pull off the job. The following sections are designed to provide answers for the most likely options they might pursue in infiltrating the party, locating the component, avoiding notice, and getting out afterwards. Players may, of course, come up with different plans than those described here, and you can use the general difficulty of the options described here as a guide for running with their plans. As players plan out their strategy for the heist, work to make sure that each player has something useful and fun to do along the way. This may include actions that aren't necessarily their specialized skill set, but which can be part of making sure the whole team finds success.

How Do We Get In?

Once the PCs learn about the Thanex soiree, they can use that as their pretext to get into the building hidden in plain sight among the other guests, or may choose to infiltrate the building at another time. If the PCs choose to bypass the soiree entirely, go to **Breaking and Entering**. If they wish to attend as guests, however, they'll need to secure an invitation to get in.

Friend of a Friend: If the PCs ask around to any of their friends, Relstanna can secure an invitation for two guests as representatives of the Bellianic Accord. If they'd rather be a bit more inconspicuous about their connection to Relstanna, **Andretta** (female aasimar mystic) has made many friends in Argosan high society and has an invitation and can invite one of the PCs to escort her to the soiree. Either Relstanna or Andretta also can show the PCs their invitation if the PCs

wish to use Culture to create a forgery.

PCs who have joined one of the other Coteries (other than the Avaar, the bitter rivals of the Thanex) also may ask one of the higher-level guild factors to secure them an invitation, requiring a successful DC 20 Diplomacy check and a bribe of 100 credits (reduced by 10 credits for every 10 by which PCs' result exceeds the DC).

Joining the Guard: The Thanex guard staff in Argosa is primarily composed of half-orcs, many of whom have trained velociraptors to aid them. A PC must have darkvision or low-light vision and must demonstrate his martial prowess by showing that they can disarm or grapple a KAC 12 opponent and hit an EAC/KAC 20 target 60 feet away with a ranged attack; they are given five attempts at each task and must succeed at least three times on each. Once they prove their basic competence, they are interviewed by a Thanex security officer and must succeed at at least two out of three DC 20 Bluff or Diplomacy checks (or a DC 25 Intimidate check). The PC gains a +2 circumstance bonus on this check if he is fluent in Orc, and even if they fail the interview the PC can attempt a DC 20 Sense Motive check to intuit that the guards use code signals in Orc.

A PC who gets hired as a guard is assigned a red Thanex cloak and armband and is assigned to perimeter patrol around the outside of the grounds, or inside the grounds if their result exceeds the check DC by at least 10. Whatever their assignment, they are also assigned a partner to keep an eye on them during their probationary employment.

PCs also can use a magical or mundane disguise to impersonate one of the existing guards and simply use Bluff and Disguise checks to pass themselves off as a legitimate guard. The guards may challenge one another using code words in Orc. A PC fluent in Orc can attempt a Bluff check to satisfy such questioning, but Bluff checks in other languages automatically fail for this purpose.

If a PC wishes to actually replace a guard (rather than impersonating one and risking the real guard also showing up), he can discover who works for the Thanex as guards at the Manse with a DC 25 Diplomacy check to gather information, or can observe one of the guards directly and track them to their home with a DC 25 Survival check and either attack them there, or attempt a DC 15 Culture check to pick out an ideal location to intercept and ambush them en route to or from their home. If the guard is incapacitated, its clothing, gear, and uniform can be used to improve a disguise, granting a +5 bonus on Disguise checks to appear as that guard. If the guard was dealt lethal damage during the attack, the uniform must be repaired with a DC 20 Engineering check, *mending*, or *make whole* in order to grant this bonus.

On the Rooftop: One or more PCs may remain outside the soiree, perhaps using a combination of flight and invisibility to enter the grounds and taking up a position on top of the Thanex Guild Manse. From there, they can wait ready to deliver supplies to characters inside who have passed through the secured entrances or to pick things up from them. This

character also can help coordinate communication and/or provide a rescue if a character gets into trouble. A companion or drone can be used in this role. As long as a character remains atop the building, they are unlikely to be noticed by the raptors' sense of smell, but if coming down to a window to deliver or pick up something, they typically have only 1d6 rounds between patrols where they could be spotted. The half-orc night watch all have darkvision, so shadows provide no concealment for attempting Stealth checks. Climbing up or down the walls requires a successful DC 20 Athletics check; the high windows are only 5 feet from the edge of the roof. Moving up or down the sloping tile roof requires a successful DC 15 Athletics check or DC 20 Acrobatics check, and requires a Stealth check opposed by the guards' Perception to avoid making any sound. If a character rolls a natural 1 on this Stealth check, she dislodges a tile which crashes noisily to the ground and may alert guards to her location. A flying creature must hover at a window in order to deliver or receive something from inside.

Sneaking: PCs can attempt to sneak into the party invisibly, but all entrances are monitored with velociraptor companions using scent to seek out invisible creatures and barking out a warning when they notice them and hunting them with their handlers. In addition, the party is very crowded, and it is difficult for invisible creatures to move about without constantly bumping into partygoers. Invisible creatures treat all areas within the Manse, including the verandas, halls, and patios, as difficult terrain, and the Perception DC to notice their presence and location is increased by only +10 (+20 if they are stationary), and in a combat situation there is a 50% chance per round that an invisible creature may be targeted with a bull rush or trip combat maneuver (equal chance of either, using an attack bonus of +3) made by a creature blundering into them.

Stolen Invitation: A PC can simply dress as a noble or courtier, looking suitable for the soiree, and while mingling with the crowd can use Sleight of Hand to steal another creature's invitation and pass it off as his own. An escort, merchant, or socialite has only a 50% chance to have an invitation of their own rather than as a companion to a higher-ranking invited NPC. Attempts to steal an invitation from such creatures automatically fail but may be noticed by them or other creatures nearby.

Once an invitation has been stolen, the PC can attempt a DC 15 Bluff or Intimidate check with the guards and major domo to gain entry with the invitation. He takes a -5 penalty on this Bluff check if the stolen invitation is for a different race or gender than his own; these penalties stack. If the actual invitee gets to the entry first and cannot find their invitation, they create a commotion that makes the guards more suspicious, imposing an additional -5 penalty on Bluff or Intimidate checks made against them for the next 10 minutes.

An ally can create a distraction in line by attempting a combat maneuver check against the invitee. An ally also could attempt a Bluff check to create a distraction, allowing

the PC stealing the invitation to slip past unnoticed and get ahead of the invitee in line. Two allies also could stage a mock fight or argument, blocking the invitee's path as they push each other around. Bystanders call for the guards to intervene, but it takes 1d4 rounds for them to arrive. If a PC has infiltrated the guards, there is a 25% chance that the PC is one of the guards asked to intervene. Characters creating a ruckus are asked to leave unless they succeed at a DC 20 Bluff or Intimidate check to persuade the guards it was just an accident and it won't happen again or that they are very important people who must not be blocked from attending the event.

With the Band: The Thanex have hired numerous musicians and performers to provide entertainment at the soiree. A DC 20 Diplomacy check and 1 day of asking around (requiring 3d6 credits in bribes and rounds of drinks) can locate one of these entertainers. The PC could use this opportunity simply to bribe the entertainer to allow her to take their place at the soiree with a successful DC 25 Diplomacy or Intimidate check and a bribe of 100 credits, decreasing by 10 credits for every 5 by which her result exceeds the DC. A check failed by less than 5 results in the performer demanding a bribe of $1d4+1 \times 100$ credits, but they flatly refuse if the check is failed by 5 or more. The DC can be reduced by 5 and the amount of the bribe reduced by 75% if a PC simply asks to see the performer's contract and pass this to the party in order to create a forgery with Culture (as this world does not use computer technology and the documents are still paper). A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Sense Motive check after a refusal realizes the offended artist is likely to spread rumors about the PC attempting to bribe them.

The PC can force the performer to cooperate, such as by following them to a discreet location and assaulting them (perhaps with one or more other PCs as accomplices) or using mind-affecting magic such as *charm person* or *suggestion*. If only a Will save is required, treat the entertainer as having a Will save of +7. If full statistics are required, use the stats for Yinni Bricala (see pg. 18). If the PC borrows some of the performer's own items as part of a disguise and is trained in a Profession skill appropriate to performing, he gains a +2 circumstance bonus on Disguise checks to impersonate that performer.

Once at the soiree, a performer will be required to perform for 1d4x10 minutes at a time, usually assigned to a position in the Grand Ballroom, with breaks of 1d4x5 minutes before having to perform again. Unlike most guests, a performer is allowed to bring in a container for his instruments, costume changes, comedic props, and the like. Such containers are inspected, but an entertainer gains a +5 bonus on Bluff checks to avoid close scrutiny. Items also can be smuggled inside of a musical instrument, including placing a *null-space chamber* or similar item inside, as instruments will not be closely inspected.

Working the Party: PCs can gain entry to the Manse as part of the catering and service company preparing and serving food and drink to the guests. **Baedin** and **Caefin**, the caravan guards the PCs may have rescued in *To Worlds Unknown*, have extensive contacts with food, wine, and spice merchants, and

PART 1: THE THANEX CAPER

can get PCs hired as servants with the providers working the party. This requires a successful DC 20 Diplomacy check and a bribe of 100 credits (reduced by 10 credits for every 10 by which PC's result exceeds the DC). A character with an appropriate Profession skill, such as cook or bartender, could instead attempt a DC 20 Profession check with no bribe. Servant staff are provided with servant uniforms, so any weapon or similar item must be hidden with Sleight of Hand or Stealth.

WHO WILL BE THERE?

The PCs can learn about the guest list for the party with a successful DC 18 Diplomacy or Culture check. Each successful check takes 1d4 hours and reveals one name from those listed below, plus an additional name for every 2 points by which the check exceeds the DC. Most NPCs are indifferent to PCs, or unfriendly if they are dressed as guards or servants. The jagladine are hostile but do not turn violent.

- **Andretta** the aasimar mystic from *To Worlds Unknown*, here as a socialite, with **BR-N3R** her arachnid robot.
- **Claigllood**, an elderly locathah historian from the water-world of Vereen.
- **Essog Sr'rlin** and **Qurux Yallin**, jagladine diplomats from the Hegemony.
- **Graydin Umbarda**, a lecherous old merchant of great wealth and one of the Peers of the Nambrin Coterie.
- **Grifokk Huz**, a scarlet-scaled zvarr factor of the Casticar Coterie.
- **G'uurul Faa**, the tall blue-skinned mercane overseer of the Thanex slave prison in the asteroid colonies known as the Shattered Zone.
- **Jaheera Fire-Eyes**, the High Auditor of Zel-Argose.
- **Khedri** the krang, who returned from Rythes with the PCs after the events of *The Scavenged Codex* and continues serving the Bellianic Accord.
- **Mr. Sarlu** from *The Scavenged Codex* (if he survived).
- **Relstanna** the elali from *To Worlds Unknown*, here as the official representative of the Bellianic Accord.
- **Revelle Chax**, a serious, no-nonsense half-elf who is considered one of the rising stars of the Thanex Coterie behind the scenes for her keen mind.
- **Torgrimm** the purple-skinned star titan, using magic to reduce his size.

• **Tyreene Thanex**, the public spokeswoman for the Thanex Coterie, though not its true leader.

• **Tyrilious Tindal**, a half-elf dandy (and secret lover of **Tyreene Thanex**), a lesser factor in the Thanex Coterie.

• **Xerb Hiflorn**, a tretharri cybernetic technician from the Beacon colony in the Shattered Zone, accompanied by his ragged dog, **Ja'ama**, given a wide berth by most guests at the soiree.

There are representatives of other coterie in Zel-Argose, with the notable exception of the Avaar, the bitter rivals of the Thanex; those listed above are simply the most famous attendees, or the most relevant to the PCs' interests, of course; there are over 200 guests at the soiree and the PCs may well encounter other characters on short notice. Whenever the PCs must interact with an unnamed partygoer at the soiree, roll 1d12 and consult the following table to determine the type of guest. The house staff represent butler, chef, sommelier, and similar supervisors of the general servant staff; typical servants are CR 1 and can be found throughout the soiree (use the statistics below for Courtesans if necessary).

HOW DO WE FIND THE COMPONENT?

If PCs break into the Manse, they must explore the various rooms to find the component in **A9**. Both doors to **A9** are locked at night. If they look for it during the soiree, they can circulate through the various rooms at the Manse looking for it or can query some of the guests to see if they know where it is, or try to convince them to show the PC the item. A Coterie Factor or Diplomat that works for the Thanex (50% chance) knows it is displayed in **A9**, and any other attendee if made friendly suggests finding such a person, and with their assistance the PCs get an introduction to a Thanex Factor or Diplomat (equal chance of either) within 2d4 minutes.

Showing Off: Thanex Factors and Diplomats are shrewd traders but also boastful and proud. If asked about the broken gate and the component they tend to belabor the history of the Thanex and their preeminent role in safeguarding Argosa from outside interference. They relish banter and wordplay but are always looking for an angle. They can be persuaded to show the component to a PC who can best them in two out of three opposed skill checks: Diplomacy versus Diplomacy (to flatter their ego), Intimidate versus Intimidate (to flaunt their

D12	TYPE OF GUEST	CR	WILL	BLUFF	DIPLOMACY	INTIMIDATE	PERCEPTION	SENSE MOTIVE
1	House Staff	3	+6	+3	+13	+8	+8	+13
2	Courtesan	1	+4	+10	+10	+5	+5	+10
3-4	Socialite	1/2	+3	+9	+9	+4	+0	+4
5-7	Merchant	1	+5	+5	+10	+5	+10	+10
8	Officer	4	+7	+5	+15	+10	+15	+10
9	Politician	5	+8	+16	+16	+11	+11	+16
10-11	Coterie Factor	5	+8	+16	+11	+11	+11	+11
12	Diplomat	6	+10	+18	+18	+13	+13	+18

power and position, and the risk of angering them), and Bluff versus Sense Motive (to manipulate the conversation their way). A PC offering the Thanex leader an exotic drink (which can be obtained from the House Staff for 1d6x10 credits) gains a +2 circumstance bonus on all opposed checks.

If the PCs' persuasion succeeds, the Thanex leader escorts them to **A9**, accompanied by 1d4 random partygoers using the table above. The PC can bring one other guest, but other PCs can attempt to slip into the library with them with a successful Stealth check (with a +2 bonus if the Thanex leader has accepted an exotic drink). The Thanex leader shows PCs the display case with the decoy component, lauding its glorious history and telling the tale again of how the Thanex saved Argosa. PCs can take this opportunity to inspect the display case and search for traps. A PC closely examining the component with a successful DC 22 Engineering check recognizes that the decoy component does not match the gate technology they have seen elsewhere, such as on the gates connecting Argosa to Rythes in *The Scavenged Codex* or to the prison planet of Garsilt in *To Worlds Unknown*, and is likely a fake.

PCs accompanying the one engaging the Thanex leader's attention can search elsewhere in the library and may find the real secret compartment on the north wall. PCs carefully examining the three statues in the room may discover their eyes seem to follow creatures around the room (DC 20 Perception, but only if actively inspecting them). A PC who succeeds at a DC 18 Mysticism check recognizes that they are caryatid columns. After touring the library for 1d4 minutes, the Thanex leader escorts the PC and his associates out. If any other PC attempts to stay behind in the library, a Stealth check is required; if more than one attempts to stay behind, the Stealth checks for all PCs take a -5 penalty for each PC after the first.

Not What It Seems: A few people know the decoy component is not real. **Tyreene Thanex** and **Revelle Chax** know this but will not reveal this information unless magically compelled. However, some others may reveal the information:

- If **Tyrilious Tindal** (use Diplomat stats above) is made friendly, he can be persuaded by flattering him about his fashion sense and natural leadership (opposed Bluff vs. Sense Motive) while also goading him about his tenuous position within the Coterie from those jealous of him (opposed Intimidate vs. Sense Motive). Mentioning his romantic entanglement with Tyreene Thanex grants a +2 circumstance bonus on these opposed checks. If both succeed,

he whispers conspiratorially about how the component in the display case is a fake and how he's seen the real one, in a secret compartment on the other side of the library, and even describes its length (3 feet long).

- **Graydin Umbarda** (use Coterie Factor stats above) was part of a secret merchant council that recommended destroying the gate, and he watched it happen. He knows what the component looks like and that the decoy isn't it. He doesn't willingly share this information, but he can be seduced with flirtation into revealing secrets. His initial attitude is unfriendly to male characters and indifferent to female characters with Charisma of 15 or less, but friendly to those with Charisma 16 or greater. If made helpful, he can be plied with flirtatious comments and salacious innuendo by succeeding on two out of three Bluff checks opposed by his Sense Motive. These may include promising future favors to be provided by another character. This could even be one the PC does not know but points out in the crowd (or even an illusion), though this results in a -5 penalty on such Bluff checks unless the PC has arranged with that character to give some sign of recognition like a wink and a smile.

If a PC talks Graydin him about the component, the fact that it is a fake comes into his surface thoughts and can be learned with *detect thoughts*. While he knows the decoy is fake, he does not know where the real one is, though his best guess is that it is located elsewhere in the library.

- **Grifokk Huz** (a zvarr Coterie Factor) has been shown the decoy component by Thanex leaders but has noticed it is a fake, and also that the statues in that room are caryatid columns. Given the presence of construct guards, he is fairly certain there is either a poisonous or mind-affecting trap as well. If made friendly while PCs are asking about the component, he offers to trade what he knows for money, either 100 credits immediately or a promise for 500 credits in the future. If PCs offer gems or other items, Grifokk appraises them (Culture +17) to verify their value. If made helpful, the bribe required is halved.

If a PC talks to Grifokk about the component, the fact that it is a fake comes into his surface thoughts and can be learned with *detect thoughts*. While he knows the decoy is fake, he does not know where the real one is, though his best guess is that it is located elsewhere in the library.





How Do We Avoid Notice?

The crowds at the soiree grant cover to PCs trying to use Stealth to blend into the crowd. However, they can enhance their chances of going unseen in several ways.

Calm the Beasts: The velociraptor guard-beasts can be pacified by making them friendly with a successful DC 30 Survival check to handle an animal.

Create Distractions: At any point, a PC can attempt a Bluff check to create a distraction in which to hide, slipping into the crowd and moving away. In addition, a PC can create a distraction to help an ally with a surreptitious combat maneuver. If the maneuver succeeds, the ally can immediately attempt a Stealth check to hide. The target of the combat maneuver takes a -2 penalty on Perception checks to spot the character using Stealth for every 5 by which the PC's result exceeded the target's KAC+8. When performing such a combat maneuver, a PC can attempt a Sleight of Hand check opposed by the target's Sense Motive; on a success, the target does not notice who performed the combat maneuver.

Disguised as the Help: PCs disguised as servants or guards gain a +5 bonus on Stealth checks to hide in a crowd.

Magical Research: Various local vendors sell *spell ampoules of nondetection* for 3,000 credits, for characters wishing to bring magic items with them without showing up on *detect magic* or other divinations.

With a DC 18 Mysticism check, a local technomancer can be found that will provide individual castings of the spell for 800 credits each. Each casting lasts 8 hours and he can cast up to three per day.

Special Delivery: Rather than trying to smuggle in their gear, PCs can arrange for an ally (see **On the Rooftop** above) to deliver key items through a window at a prearranged time or prearranged signal. See **Out the Window** below for rules on getting creatures or objects through the windows.

The Side Door: PCs wishing to slip unnoticed into the library can enter through the locked door from A6. That room is often unoccupied, and slipping from the kitchen into A6 requires only a DC 20 Stealth check (DC 15 if dressed as kitchen help). The door from A5 to A6 can be jammed shut with Engineering.

Entering the library unnoticed from the eastern door into the ballroom at A10 is much more difficult, requiring a DC 30 Stealth check regardless of the character's dress. This is reduced to DC 20 (or 15 if dressed as a servant or guard) if an illusion is used to make the door appear to be shut even as the PC enters. This door can likewise be jammed shut to buy time to investigate and explore.

How Do We Get Out?

Before PCs move on the Guild Manse, they may investigate the location and the Thanex with friends and allies, or by gathering information elsewhere in Zel-Argose, in order to gain useful knowledge about the Thanex and how the Guild Manse is protected.

Create a Diversion: The PCs can utilize their talents to create a massive distraction in some portion of the Manse. This could include using illusions, mentally controlled or summoned creatures, mind-affecting area effects like *confusion* or *fear*, or anything else they devise. The diversion could range from having a lone singer crash the music stage and begin drunkenly bellowing their favorite tune or arguing with the musicians to starting an impromptu dance competition, knocking over buffet tables and trays of drinks, or inciting a brawl. The PCs may do this themselves or may command a charmed or otherwise mentally influenced character to do so. Once the diversion begins, there are 2d4 rounds of panic and confusion, during which time all Perception and Sense Motive checks attempted by NPCs take a penalty of -2 or -5, depending on the scope of the diversion. Once this initial wave of panic passes, all guards and Thanex NPCs become more suspicious, gaining a +2 circumstance bonus on Perception and Sense Motive checks for the next 10 minutes, and everyone entering or leaving the Manse will be carefully searched.

Off Duty: If PCs have entered the soiree in disguise as entertainers, guards, or servants, they will be challenged if they attempt to leave before the soiree is over, requiring a successful DC 25 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check to allow them to leave without raising an alarm. If a disguised PC smuggles in an alternative outfit or creates a disguise as a socialite or merchant, she can escape notice with a DC 15 Disguise check.

Out the Window: The windows facing the south and east sides of the building are large, offering sweeping views of the gardens, but all other windows are small and mullioned in hexagonal pattern, with each pane only six inches across. Individual panes can be broken out (hardness 1, HP 3, break DC 13), but breaking a space large enough for even a small creature to wriggle through is more difficult (hardness 10, HP 20, break DC 23). The windows are also set high on the walls, at least 10 feet above ground level, requiring a successful DC 20 Athletics check to reach.

However, if the component is recovered from the library, a single pane could be knocked out and the component shoved out the window to a waiting accomplice and the window then repaired with *mending* or *make whole* (or just left broken, requiring a DC 10 Perception check to notice it). A Tiny creature such as a hover drone could squeeze through a single pane with a DC 20 Acrobatics check. A failed check causes 1 point of damage from bits of broken glass.

Smuggled Out: A PC can use Sleight of Hand to slip the component into another object, such as a musical instrument for a performer, or a garbage container for someone posing as kitchen help, and then carry that object out. This functions like Sneak it Out, but grants

the PC a +2 or +5 circumstance bonus on Sleight of Hand checks to avoid notice, subject to the GM's discretion on their efforts to hide the item in a way that fits with their disguise.

Sneaking Out: A PC can use Sleight of Hand to hide the component on their person and simply carry it out. However, its length makes it difficult to hide, imposing a -10 penalty on this check. If the component is broken into smaller pieces (hardness 10, HP 10, break DC 23), this penalty is eliminated but the component must be repaired with *mending* or *make whole* before being installed into the gate. The item can be carried out by a character who becomes invisible, and the item itself can be targeted with *invisibility*, granting the person carrying it a +20 bonus on Sleight of Hand checks to keep it out of sight.

Teleportation: The PCs can use teleportation to enter or exit the Thanex Guild Manse. Exotic metals worked into its construction make this more dangerous than normal, a character using *teleport* must roll twice and take the worse result when determining if the teleportation was on-target. Creatures using teleportation effects that normally have no chance of error, such as *dimension door*, have the same chance of error as a *teleport* spell (though they need not roll twice).



PART 1: THE THANEX CAPER

COMPLICATIONS

In addition to the guards at the doorways, there are a number of dangerous NPCs roaming the soiree with their eyes and ears very alert. Whenever a PC rolls a natural 1 on any skill check or combat maneuver check within the Manse, they attract the attention of one or more of the following NPCs.

D6 ROLL	NPC
1	Revelle Chax
2-3	Aric Pellicer
4-7	Thanex Blade
8-9	Night Watch guard with velociraptor (see Breaking and Entering , p. 7)
10	Keeper Axater (see Breaking and Entering , p. 7)

REVELLE CHAX

CR 7

XP 3,200

Female half-elf

N Medium humanoid (elf, human)

Init +2; Senses low-light vision; Perception +14

DEFENSE

HP 100

EAC 19; KAC 20

Fort +6; Ref +6; Will +10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee buzzblade dueling sword +13 (2d6+7 S)

TACTICS

Behavior Revelle is the most cautious and perceptive of the Thanex factors at the soiree, and the most difficult to trick. She mostly concerns herself with political dealings with the more important guests at the soiree, but her keen intellect is quick to notice anything amiss and she may interrogate any guest who seems suspicious, signaling the nearest Thanex Blade to come to her side if she does not get immediate satisfaction.

STATISTICS

Str +0; Dex +2; Con +1; Int +1; Wis +4; Cha +5

Skills Bluff +19, Diplomacy +19, Intimidate +19, Mysticism +14, Sense Motive +14

Languages Common, Elven

Gear business stationwear, buzzblade dueling sword with 1 battery (20 charges)

AIRICA PELLICER, MAJOR DOMO

CR 4

XP 1,200

Female human technomancer

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; Perception +10

DEFENSE

HP 43

EAC 16; KAC 16

Fort +3; Ref +3; Will +7

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee cestus battleglove +6 (1d4+4 B)

Technomancer Spells Known (CL 4th; ranged +6)

2nd (3/day)—*caustic conversion*, *see invisibility*

1st (6/day)—*charm person* (DC 16), *detect thoughts* (DC 16), *magic missile*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *telepathic message*

TACTICS

Behavior Airica monitors the main entry at A1 during the first hour of the soiree, when most guests are arriving, and thereafter spends the rest of the soiree patrolling the various rooms using *see invisibility*. If PCs attract her attention, she uses *detect thoughts* (DC 16) to see if she can uncover their plans and *charm person* (DC 16) to convince a PC to reveal their true identity or tell her their plans. If she spots an invisible creature or object, she signals to one of the Thanex Blades to accompany her and apprehend that creature.

STATISTICS

Str +0; Dex +1; Con +0; Int +5; Wis +1; Cha +3

Skills Diplomacy +15, Engineering +15, Mysticism +10

Languages Aquan, Common, Elven, Orc

Other Abilities spell cache

Gear basic lashunta tempweave, cestus battleglove, *spell gem of see invisibility*

THANEX BLADES (4)

CR 6

XP 2,400

Human operative

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +5; Perception +10

DEFENSE

HP 80 EACH

EAC 18; KAC 19

Fort +5; Ref +9; Will +5

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee tactical baton +14 (1d4+8 B)

Ranged corona laser pistol +14 (2d4+6 F; critical burn 1d4)

Offensive Abilities trick attack +3d8

TACTICS

Behavior Thanex Blades are hired killers that serve the coterie when their enemies require elimination. There are a total of four Thanex Blades in attendance, and they patrol the Guild Manse during the soiree; if you wish to place them in specific locations, roll 1d10 (treating a result of 9 as area A11). The blades attempt to blend into the crowd while observing those around them. If they notice suspicious activity, they will attempt a DC 15 Bluff check to signal another blade or Revelle if they are in the same room (DC 20 if in an adjacent room) before going to investigate. If they see through a PC's disguise, they assume they are thieves and use a stickybomb grenades to try to trap them, then if PCs do not surrender use Spring Attack each round to attack and then melt back into the crowd using Stealth. If the Thanex Blade succeeds on a DC 20 Sleight of Hand check, the crowd around them does not notice their attack (the PCs and any named NPCs in the same room automatically notice the attack).

PCs who state they are looking for hidden guards can attempt Perception checks to oppose the blades' Stealth checks. If they notice a blade in their room, they can attempt a Sense Motive check opposing their Bluff check to reveal that they are clearly being stealthy on purpose and seem to be carefully observing the rooms around them, or a second Perception check opposing their Sleight of Hand checks to notice they are carrying concealed weapons.

STATISTICS

Str +2; **Dex** +5; **Con** +1; **Int** +1; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +3

Skills Bluff +15, Culture +10, Intimidate +10, Sleight of Hand +15, Stealth +15

Feats Spring Attack

Languages Common, Orc

Gear elite stationwear, corona laser pistol with 1 battery (20 charges), tactical baton, stickybomb grenades I (3)



In addition, Revelle Chax and the guards will sweep the house after the soiree ends. If PCs have been careful, their theft may not be noticed right away. Assume they have a lead of 1d4 hours, or 2d4x10 minutes if they created a major diversion to aid their escape. Then reduce the amount of their head start by 5 minutes for every check they failed during the heist (10 minutes for a natural 1), and for each object that was broken and not immediately repaired, to a minimum of a 5-minute head start. If the shattered caryatid columns are found, that reduces time by 1 hour. If the speed of the slowest party member is greater than 30 feet, increase their lead by 5 minutes for every 10 feet over 30. If all PCs traveled to the Thanex Warehouse by teleportation, increase the base lead time to 1d8 hours or 3d4x10 minutes. Once the Thanex notice the theft, Revelle Chax immediately summons Keeper Axater and sends him and several Thanex Blades and Night Watch (as many as you feel appropriate to challenge the PCs) to the Thanex Warehouse.

A1. GRAND ENTRANCE

A splendid staircase from the manicured grounds and gardens leads up to a semicircular plaza backed by a massive red-painted doors inlaid with the Thanex Coterie insignia in burnished gold. Delicate alien flowers in red and gold sprout from carved vases along the balustrades to either side, while a plush carpet of deep crimson leads up the steps. Liveried guards stand at attention with leashed velociraptors to either side as guests make their entrance or make small talk around the entry. A long colonnaded veranda runs the length of the building as guests mingle in front of the hexagonally mullioned windows. To the east, another set of great doors stands open and sounds of merriment can be heard.

During the soiree, a pair of night watch guards and their velociraptor companions (see page 8) flank the main entrance, plus an additional night watch guard and companion just outside the entrance to the Grand Ballroom (A10). The raptors use their scent constantly to look for invisible creatures. At any given time, there are 3d6 merchants roaming around this area in conversation.

A2. FOYER

This grand atrium has a high ceiling with five crystal chandeliers each gleaming with heatless flame reflected from mirrored facets. The floor here is tiled in overlapping hexagons of crimson, gray, and gold, with a long staircase leading up to a pair of dark-stained wooden doors. Archways lead west towards a bustling buffet and dining area, and east towards a long salon filled with the sound of laughter and music. A long hallway extends north flanking the rising staircase.

The doors atop the stair are locked (Engineering DC 40). The second floor is not mapped and contains unoccupied meeting rooms and guest chambers.

This area is filled with constant traffic heading in every direction.

A3. RESTROOMS

These stylish lavatories are well-appointed with polished white marble veined with streaks of silver, along with basins of polished tin. A variety of bottled soaps and astringents are available for guests to use.

There is nothing of interest here, but the area can serve as a quiet area to talk away from prying eyes and ears or to change into a disguise.

A4. DINING HALL

Long tables of polished stone are lavishly set with crystal ewers of wine and spirits accompanied by alabaster goblets, with mirror-bright polished utensils and dishes of delicate porcelain for serving out an array of delicacies, many delectable to human palates and others decidedly alien in appearance. Chairs in a variety of shapes and sizes flank the tables and are placed around the walls and windows for the comfort of all manner of guests.

The dining area is well-trafficked with guests, and PCs have a 25% chance per minute of encountering one of the named NPCs. If the PCs have not previously made contact with Andretta, Baedin, or Caeftin, they may encounter them here.

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In addition, in this room they are likely to encounter **Claiglool**, an amphibious locathah of great age. He seems unhappy and is drowning his sorrows in food and drink, while most guests give him a wide berth. He has a strong briny aroma and his skin glistens wetly. He is indifferent if approached (Diplomacy modifier +10), but if made friendly he reveals he is a historian from the water-world of Vereen, traveling here on formal business from his Council and is hoping to make favorable connections with the Thanex, having already been turned away by the Avaar.

If made helpful, he reveals that there have been alien incursions on Vereen by a tentacled race never seen before, wielding strange technomagical beam weapons. These raids have been sporadic, always targeting small outposts and outlying settlements, but there is worry they may develop into something more. The council is reaching out to find potential allies on Argosa. Better to be prepared for the worst and hope for the best. He is appreciative of them taking the time to listen and asks if they have any Coterie connections that might be of use. If they offer to refer him to Relstanna and the Bellianic Accord or any other Coterie contacts they have made on Argosa, he thanks them profusely and offers a pearl *spell ampoule of life bubble* in by way of thanks.

A5. KITCHEN

This bustling kitchen is filled with the clatter of dishes being prepared or washed, with the steam of cookpots and saucepans mingling with curt chatter between the kitchen staff and servers.

PCs not in disguise as servers or kitchen staff find the servants here mostly unfriendly, as they are extremely busy managing the event and do not wish to be interrupted. If PCs have not previously made contact with Baedin and Caeftin, there is a 75% chance per minute to encounter one of them here.

A6. PARLOR

The walls of this room are covered in heavy wooden cabinets, mostly devoted to liquor storage, interspersed with tastefully framed artwork and oddly fashioned stone statuettes. Small padded chairs and tables provide space for small groups of guests to be entertained in relative quiet. A swinging door leads into the kitchens to the west, while additional doors with decorative locks split the south and east walls. Narrow clerestory windows provide natural light during the day, while a crystal lamps with

There is a 25% chance when PCs arrive that one of the named NPCs may be here entertaining 1d4 Thanex merchants. If no one is here, check this chance only once per hour thereafter. There is a 25% chance per minute of servants coming into this room to retrieve additional liquid or something from the storeroom; if guests are here, reduce his chance to 5%.

The door to the storeroom is unlocked, but the door to the library is locked (DC 30 Engineering).

Treasure: The Thanex Coterie has an extensive liquor and wine cellar below this room, with the racks stored below the floor and raised and lowered by an elaborate winch and pulley system in each cabinet. A PC can spend 1d4 rounds retrieving a wine rack and examining the contents with a DC 15 Culture check. A successful check uncovers a bottle worth 25 credits, plus an additional bottle for every 5 by which her result exceeds the DC. If she rolls a natural 20, one of the bottles is an exceptional vintage worth 250 credits. Each bottle, regardless of value, is 1 bulk.

A7. STOREROOM

This capacious pantry has but one door, leading back into the parlor. This chamber is densely packed with crates, casks, racks, shelves, and hanging baskets containing all manner of food and drink, with almost everything meticulously labeled and organized.



Bob Gersperstein

While most of the party supplies are already staged in the kitchen, there is a 25% chance per minute that a servant comes to the storeroom to retrieve something. The door to the storeroom has a lock, but it is not locked during the soiree due to the constant traffic. If there are guests in the parlor, reduce this chance to 5%.

Treasure: The Thanex Coterie has a substantial collection of rare and exotic foodstuffs here. A PC wishing to purloin some choice delicacies can spend 2d4 rounds attempting a DC 15 Culture check. A character retrieves 1d4 bulk of high-quality food and drink worth 25 credits per bulk with each successful check, plus an additional 1d4 bulk for every 5 by which her result exceeds the DC.

A8. SALON (CR 5)

This long salon is festooned with tapestries and paintings and is divided by a partially curtained archway. The inner chamber boasting a small stage where an attractive female prances about with a fiddle and an array of hats, wigs, and masks dangling from her costume, switching through a succession of roles in a one-woman show of salacious skits. A dozen guests stand nearby admiring her antics, with one pulled upon stage now and then to get pulled into the act. Doors lead out of the inner salon to the west and east, while the outer salon offers multiple archways giving egress to the front hall and foyer of the manse and a door leading east.

Yinni Bricala provides entertainment here for the guests, while also keeping an eye on them and on people moving into and out of the Grand Ballroom.

YINNI BRICALA		CR 5
XP 1,600		
Female half-elf		
NE Medium humanoid (elf, human)		
Init +2; Senses low-light vision; Perception +16		
DEFENSE		HP 85
EAC 15; KAC 16		
Fort +3; Ref +3; Will +7		
OFFENSE		
Speed 30 ft.		
Melee survival knife +12 (1d4+5 S)		
TACTICS		
Behavior Yinni poses as a simple minstrel and storyteller, using her fiddle to accent scandalous tales and act out bawdy skits; however, she is a member of the Thanex Coterie and uses Sense Motive constantly to scan the crowd in areas A8 and A10 to see if anyone seems to be acting unusually. If she sees anything odd, she attempts a DC 15 Bluff check to alert the nearest Thanex Blade or Revelle (DC 20 if in an adjacent room).		
STATISTICS		
Str +0; Dex +2; Con +0; Int +3; Wis +1; Cha +5		
Skills Bluff +11, Diplomacy +11, Sense Motive +16, Profession (minstrel) +16		
Languages Common, Elven		
Gear survival knife, fine fiddle worth 1,000 credits		

A9. PRIVATE LIBRARY (CR 9)

This rectangular chamber is furnished with hundreds if not thousands of books of every size and description, filling the dark wood shelves built into the walls. Pedestals in three corners of the room display alien sculptures in curious poses, while a dark-paneled door stands in the northwest corner of the room and another in the center of the east wall. Ceiling-height shelves cover the remaining walls, with glass-fronted display cases showing off strange artifacts and relics from a dozen worlds, from primitive carvings and masks to strange and incomprehensibly complex mechanisms of twisted metal etched with strange markings. Cushioned chairs and small tables provide a place for rest, reflection, reading, and conversation.

This quiet room is usually unoccupied, though there is a 25% chance that 1d4 random guests are here when PCs arrive. Likewise, there is a 25% chance per minute that 1d4 random guests will wander into the library to marvel at the artwork collected here. If the door has been jammed shut when such guests attempt to enter, there is a 50% chance they will simply wander off to do something else; otherwise, they knock on the door and ask what is going on in there for 1d4 rounds. PCs can confabulate a reason for needing private use of the room with a successful opposed Bluff or Intimidate check against the highest Sense Motive check in the group of guests. Each time a group comes to the door and asks for entry, the PCs take a cumulative –5 penalty on their Bluff or Intimidate check; if the check fails, the guests demand entry and if not granted they leave for 1d4–1 rounds and return with some type of security (see **Complications**, p. 16).

The door in the northwest corner to A6 is locked (hardness 5, HP 30, break DC 23, Engineering DC 30). A display case in the south wall contains a number of magical objects, including what appears to be the missing piece of the gate mechanism prominently displayed on a velvet mount inlaid with the Thanex insignia. The display case itself is securely locked (hardness 5, HP 10, break DC 18, Engineering DC 40), and is warded with an illusory trap. Attempts to disable the illusory trap automatically fail without triggering it, but it can be disbelieved with a DC 16 Will save. The case itself is not actually trapped; however, the component inside the display case is a decoy, and touching it triggers a sleeping rune engraved on it.

SYMBOL OF SLEEP TRAP CR 6

Type magical; Perception DC 29; Disable Mysticism DC 24

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset none

Effect all creatures within the room fall asleep for 3d6x10 minutes and cannot be awakened by nonmagical means (DC 16 Will negates).

Creatures: Touching the decoy component causes the three caryatid column sculptures to animate.

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CARYATID COLUMNS (3)

CR 3

XP 800 each

N Medium construct (magical)

Init -1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +13

DEFENSE

HP 35 EACH

EAC 14; KAC 16

Fort +5; Ref +2; Will +2

Defensive Abilities shatter weapons; DR 5/—; Immunities construct immunities, magic

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee stone sword +11 (1d6+7 S)

TACTICS

During Combat They attack creatures adjacent to the component when possible, but if not threatened by an opponent a caryatid column attempts to slay unconscious creatures with a coup de grace.

Morale Caryatid columns are unable to feel fear.

STATISTICS

Str +4; Dex -1; Con —; Int —; Wis +1; Cha +2

Other Abilities statue

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Immunity to Magic (Ex) A caryatid column is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance except *flesh to stone*, which removes its DR and immunity to magic for 1 round.

Shatter Weapons (Ex) Whenever a character strikes a caryatid column with a melee weapon (magical or nonmagical), the weapon takes 3d6 points of damage. Apply the weapon's hardness normally. Weapons that take any amount of damage in excess of their hardness immediately gain the broken condition.

Statue (Ex) A caryatid column can stand perfectly still, emulating a statue (usually one that is holding up the ceiling, like a carved column). An observer must succeed at a DC 20 Perception check to notice the caryatid column is alive. If a caryatid column initiates combat from this pose, it gains a +6 bonus on its initiative check.

Treasure: The actual component is secured inside a secret compartment in the bookshelves on the north wall of the room, where a false set of book bindings disguises the door of the compartment (DC 30 Perception to notice, DC 30 Engineering to open). A quartet of acid dart traps within the secret compartment are triggered if the compartment is opened; each trap requires a separate check to find and disarm.

ACID DART TRAP (4)

CR 1

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Engineering DC 18

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset none

Effect +10 ranged attack (3d6 A & P)

If a creature touches the real component, the caryatid columns activate to kill that creature and return the component to its secret compartment, closing it. They ignore other creatures unless they are attacked by them or unless

they are blocking their path to the creature that touched the component. However, the caryatid columns operate by sight; a successful DC 20 Sleight of Hand check or rendering the component invisible or otherwise hidden prevents them from noticing the theft and activating.

The actual component is a set of interlocked metal rods 3 feet long, awkward enough to be 2 bulk. They can be hidden inside a *glove of storing* or with *invisibility*; these invisible objects will not be noticed by the velociraptor guards' keen scent. Due to their length, they impose a -10 penalty on Sleight of Hand or Stealth checks to hide them, though they can be broken in half (DC 23 Strength check, hardness 10, Hit Points 10) in order to negate this penalty, requiring later repairs with *mending* or *make whole*.

A10. GRAND BALLROOM

This vast, high-ceilinged ballroom is paved in an elaborate tile pattern of overlapping crimson, gray, and gold. Skylights pierce the roof at regular intervals, with long silken hangings draping below in the colors of allied trade companies and guilds that are part of the Thanex Coterie. Throngs of guests stand at cocktail tables or lounge upon divans around the perimeter of the room. A dais at the northern end of the room holds a band performing jaunty music, with dozens of guests sashaying about in dances as servants circulate to refresh their drinks.

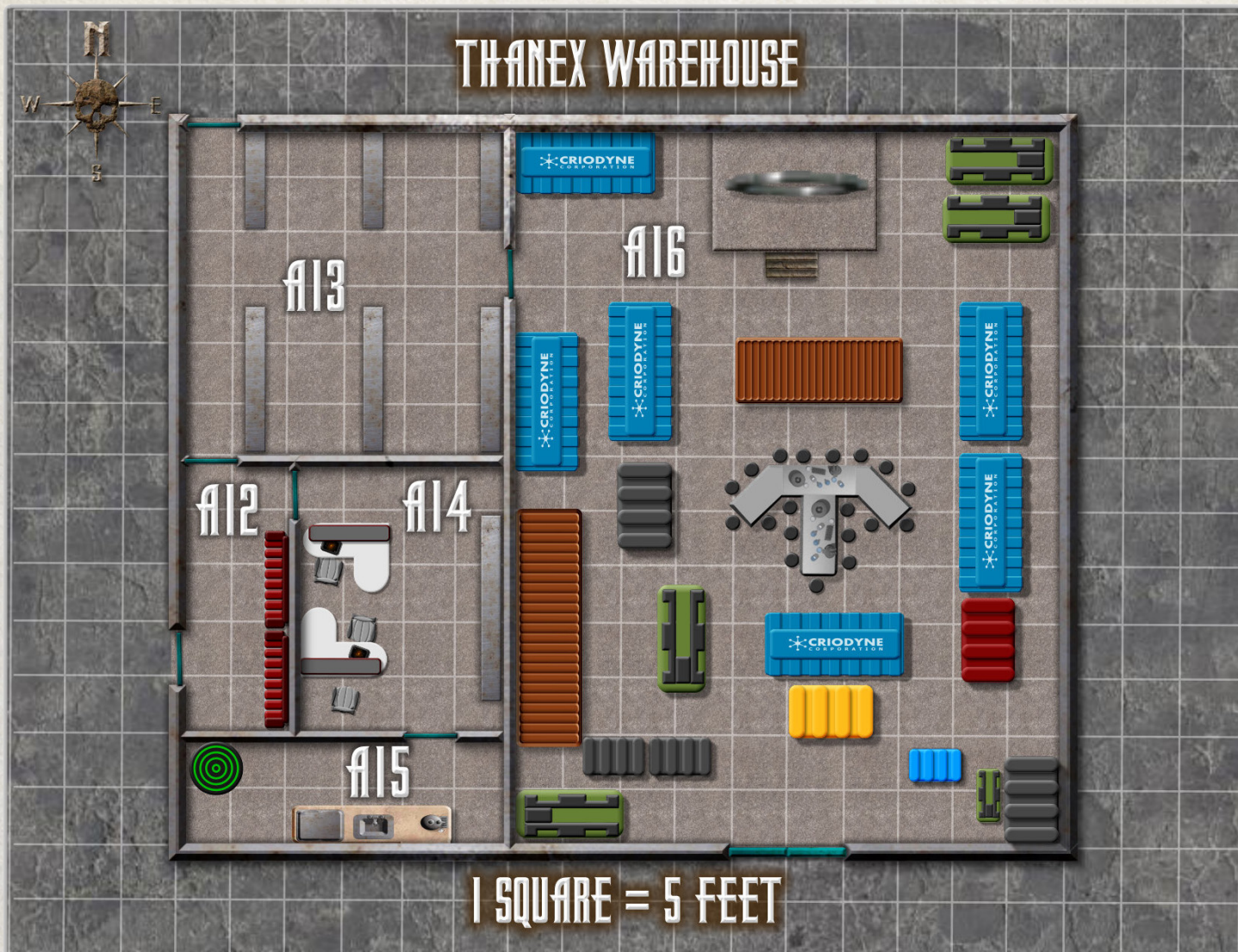
This immense banquet hall is filled with guests, between 100 and 200 at any given time. Most of the named NPCs the PCs may have learned about during their investigation of the soiree can be found here most of the time, though they occasionally wander to the dining area and salon or onto the verandas.

A11. PORTICO (CR 6)

A vine-covered pergola stands over the elaborate columned lintels of the veranda on the eastern end of the building, with a set of stairs at the northeastern corner of the building leading down to the water garden beyond. A wide set of curved stairs lets out onto a spacious patio paved in hexagonal flagstones. Widely spaced columns around the patio's edge hold crystal sconces burning with heatless flame.

During the soiree, a pair of night watch guards and their velociraptor companions (see page 16) stand guard here, one atop each set of stairs, to ensure no invisible creatures sneak into the soiree from the patio. Guests regularly come out for a bit of air before returning within, so at any time there is a 50% chance of finding 2d6 random guests and 1d4 servants here.

In addition, one of the guests from off world has found the party not much to his liking and can be found here. **Xerb Hiflorn** is a four-armed tretharri "body shopper" from an asteroid colony called Beacon in the far-off Shattered Zone, a specialist in crafting and installing cybernetic body modifications for members of the auttaine race. He is accompanied by **Ja'ama**, a riding dog, a mangy cur who is his closest companion. Xerb is unfriendly to most, but if



his dog can be made friendly or helpful Xerb's reaction also improves by one step in a positive direction. If they can cure his dog's fungal infection (DC 20 Medicine check or *remove affliction* to treat it), his attitude is improved by two steps. If made friendly, he reveals that he was invited here by **G'uurul Faa**, the overseer of the Thanex Slave prison on Beacon in the Shattered Zone. While there are many auttaine to service in the Shattered Zone, he seeks better prices for his services in an area with less competition and perhaps a healthier environment for himself and his pet.

If made helpful, he offers any auttaine in the party a chance to sample his wares at a 10% discount, either now or later at his shop in Beacon.

Xerb enjoys discussing the finer points of engineering and mechanics, and engages any PC willing to talk about them in an extensive conversation and debate. Treat this as three opposed Engineering checks against his bonus of +15, though a PC may substitute Physical Science for two of these checks if desired. If the PC wins at least one opposed check, Xerb is impressed and

his reaction improves by another step. In addition, if PCs the information gleaned in this conversation grants that PC a +2 circumstance bonus on ability checks or skill checks to activate or repair gateway technology and allows them to perform such checks in half the normal amount of time.

THE THANEX WAREHOUSE

After securing the necessary component to repair the Midnight Gate and taking their leave of the reception, the PCs should have at least a few moments for a quick change into their armor and other gear. The Thanex warehouse is located in northeastern Zel-Argose right at the foot of steep cliffs that ascend to a plateau above. Constructed with superior masonry, the facility's exterior walls are 3 feet thick, and the interior walls are 1 foot thick. All exterior doors count as very strong wooden doors. The large cargo door is securely barred, and the two smaller exterior doors are locked with exceptional locks (DC 35). The interior doors are the equivalent of strong wooden doors and are normally unlocked. The ceilings are

PART 1: THE THANEX CAPER

20 feet high, with a narrow crawlspace between the ceiling and roof. The warehouse is unlit, except where indicated. Any surveillance by the PCs reveals that no one enters or leaves the place on a daily basis. If the PCs watch for a longer period, they discover that once a week a small group of coterie guards briefly visits to deliver a package of alchemical reagents to the eastern door, but they never enter the warehouse.

If the PCs knock on the eastern door leading to **A12**, the android Dyosin (from **A15**) greets them after a brief delay, accompanied by two clockwork guards (from **A13**). Dyosin's orders require him to prevent anyone from entering the warehouse without the appropriate paperwork bearing a Thanex blood seal. Dyosin has difficulty discerning deceit in others, however—due to his non-existent Sense Motive skill—but regardless of what the PCs say, he has to receive written orders before even considering allowing the PCs inside. Such documentation does not require a specific person's handwriting but Dyosin is very familiar with the Thanex blood seal, giving him a +2 bonus on Culture checks to detect a forgery. If the PCs start a fight, Dyosin immediately retreats to his quarters to sound the alarm.

A12. ENTRY

This cramped hall has a long bench for seating opposite the main entryway. A series of empty pegs runs along the western wall.

This disused area once served as a waiting room for visitors to the warehouse as well as a break area for workers. Dyosin can hear anyone knocking on the exterior door from his quarters and he comes to deal with visitors as listed above.

A13. SECURE STORAGE (CR 8)

Rows of tall cluttered shelves divide this room. There are small unlit lanterns set next to the northern and southern doors.

Creatures: A trio of clockwork sentinels guards this area. These Small-sized automations have the appearance of mechanical apelike creatures with oversized hands. They attack anyone entering the room, except for Dyosin or the other clockwork creatures guarding the warehouse. In combat, they readily clamber over shelves to get to enemies. They are programmed to only follow orders from authorized users, and Dyosin is the only authorized user currently present at the warehouse.



Treasure: Higher quality and more compact trade goods are stored here, as opposed to in the main warehouse. If the PCs choose to loot the area, these goods are worth an average of 20 credits per bulk. However, if the PCs spend time searching for more costly goods, a successful DC 15 Culture check which takes 5 minutes locates 2d6 bulk of goods worth 50 credits per bulk. Attempting to sell these pilfered goods in Zel-Argose is very likely to draw repercussions from the Thanex Coterie.

Development: If the clockwork guards hear sounds of combat in the main warehouse, they open the western door and investigate. If combat breaks out here and Dyosin is in his quarters (**A15**) he can make Perception checks to hear the sounds of battle (modified for distance and the walls in the way).

CLOCKWORK GUARDS (3)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

N Small construct (magic, technological)

Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft., lowlight vision; Perception +8

DEFENSE

HP 66 EACH

EAC 17; KAC 19

Fort +4; Ref +7; Will +4

DR 5/—; Immunities construct immunities

Weaknesses vulnerable to electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee integrated thunderstrike gauntlet +14
(1d6+5 B & So; critical knockdown)

TACTICS

spells. Omit if the creature has no before-combat preparations.

During Combat The drones attempt to disarm, grapple, and restrain intruders using their latch ability. Their current orders are to use lethal force to subdue any who resist them.

Morale The simple clockworks are incapable of processing fear.

STATISTICS

Str +5; Dex +3; Con —; Int —; Wis +2; Cha +0

Other Abilities winding

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Winding (Ex) Clockwork creations, must be wound up before they animate. The creator of a clockwork crafts a unique key for each creation. This key is typically inserted into the clockwork's back and turned clockwise to wind it. Turning the key counterclockwise has the effect of winding the machine down, though only a willing (or completely helpless) machine will allow itself to be unwound in this way, meaning either its creator or someone its creator has

specifically designated can normally do so. Since each key is totally unique, construction of a new key (or bypassing a key entirely) requires a successful Engineering check (DC = 20 + the clockwork's CR).

A14. BACK OFFICE (CR 4)

A bookcase holding numbered ledgers and two wide desks take up much of the space in this small office.

This office holds accounts and registers of the items stored in the warehouse. These records are of little value to the PCs as they only list legitimate coterie operations; Thanex has backups of these records stored offsite.

Traps: Dyosin has trapped the marked squares of this office with handmade land mines. These mines deal sonic damage which minimizes damage to the furniture. Dyosin clambers over the desks to avoid the mines when he moves through this room.

Development: The noise of a land mine going off automatically alerts Dyosin.

LAND MINES (2)

CR 2

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 21; **Disable** Engineering DC 21

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** none

Effect 4d4+8 sonic damage plus deafness for 1 minute (Fort DC 21 negates the deafness) in a 5-foot square plus 12 sonic splash damage in adjacent squares (Reflex DC 21 for half).

A15. QUARTERS (CR 6)

A glass sphere set in the ceiling provides light to this narrow room. Alchemical and mechanical apparatus, paperwork, and glassware cover a large table along the wall opposite the room's only door. A multi-limbed robotic device sits motionless in one corner and a humanoid-shaped metallic frame rests in another.

This is Dyosin's living quarters and where he spends most of his time when not maintaining the warehouse's clockwork guardians. The metallic frame is Dyosin's rest station where he recharges and 'sleeps'. The robotic device is a wound down clockwork servant. Dyosin uses its repair ability to fix any damage to the warehouse's clockworks but otherwise leaves it deactivated unless needed.

Creature: Dyosin is an android 'employed' by the Thanex Coterie as a security guard for this warehouse. Acquired by the coterie several years ago, Dyosin had his neutral interface severely 'restricted' by coterie scientists, effectively turning him into a virtual slave. He holds no loyalty to the coterie, but is bound to follow his current orders and currently lacks the free will to even consider escape. His only outlets for individuality are researching new alchemist extracts and creating alchemical materials, which the coterie sells.

If alerted to a break-in, Dyosin activates the *chimes of warning* (pg. 80) resting on the table to sound the alarm at the

Thanex coterie's main stronghold. He then prepares himself before seeking out and confronting the intruders.

Treasure: The glass globe has minor magic cast on it to fill it with eternal flame and is worth 50 credits. The table holds an array of alchemical supplies as well as a set of trapsmith's tools. In the center of the table is an alembic holding a *serum of healing mk 3*. Underneath several pages of research notes is a book of formulas, allowing anyone referencing it to craft serums in half the time normally required (the book is worth 2,000 credits). Lastly, a set of *chimes of warning* hangs from a small stand at the end of the table. Dyosin's orders are to strike the chimes to alert the coterie if there is any intrusion in the warehouse.

Development: If an alarm goes out from the *chimes of warning*, the PCs have 45 minutes before a large heavily-armed coterie response team arrives at the warehouse. This is more than sufficient time for the PCs to repair the gate and step through it. When response team arrives, they imprison any intruders still in the warehouse, and ruthlessly slay any who resist. If the PCs capture Dyosin, he readily explains anything the PCs want to know about the warehouse, including whether the *chimes of warning* have been activated, and the probable arrival time of the response team. PCs interacting with Dyosin who succeed at a DC 25 Sense Motive check can recognize his constrained behavior is due to some form of neural restraint, in a similar way to sensing an enchantment effect on a character. Android PCs gain a +8 racial bonus on this check. Removing Dyosin's neural inhibitors requires specialized knowledge of android anatomy and several hours of delicate surgery. However, this is potentially possible at the Citadel of the Oracle (see page 36). If the PCs manage to remove the inhibitors, Dyosin is deeply indebted to them, becoming an unshakable ally of the PCs in the future.

DYOSIN

CR 6

XP 2,400

Male android technomancer

N Medium humanoid (android)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +13

DEFENSE

HP 75

EAC 17; **KAC** 19

Fort +5; **Ref** +5; **Will** +9; +2 vs. diseases, mind-affecting, poison, sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee carbon staff +9 (1d8+6 B; critical knockdown)

Ranged thunderstrike sonic pistol +12 (1d8+6 So; critical deafen [DC 16]) or cryo grenade I +8 (explode [15 ft., 1d8 C plus staggered, DC 16])

Technomancer Spells Known (CL 6th)

2nd (3/day)—*invisibility*, *mirror image*

1st (6/day)—*holographic image* (DC 17), *flight*, *overheat* (DC 17), *supercharge weapon*

o (at will)—*ghost sound* (DC 16), *mending*

TACTICS

Before Combat Dyosin casts *mirror image* and *supercharge weapon* before investigating any disturbance in the warehouse.

PART 1: THE THANEX CAPER

Morale If reduced to 25 Hit Points or less, Dyosin casts *invisibility* and retreats or surrenders if unable to flee.

STATISTICS

Str +0; **Dex** +3; **Con** +2; **Int** +5; **Wis** +0; **Cha** -1

Skills Culture +13, Engineering +18, Mysticism +18

Languages Aklo, Common, Draconic, Giant, Gnoll, Orc, Sylvan, Undercommon

Other Abilities spell cache

Gear freebooter armor II, carbon staff, thunderstrike sonic pistol with 1 battery (20 charges), 3 cryo grenades 1, keys to all warehouse doors

A16. MAIN STORAGE AREA (CR 5)

This large chamber houses rows of crates and piles of crates, barrels, chests, and other items. A tall rune-scribed arch stands on a low stone dais at one end of the storeroom.

Creatures: A pair of clockwork drones methodically patrol the main warehouse following a preset pattern, one scuttling on the ground through the stacks of crates, the other fluttering in the air above. These clockwork drones are similar in form to flying insects but also have a tail ending in a needle-sharp stinger. They investigate any disturbance in warehouse, and if they spot any intruders, they use their alert message ability to inform Dyosin before attacking.

Treasure: The goods stored in this chamber are part of the coterie's tribute accumulated through the decades. These goods are bulky but are still worth an average of 5 credits per bulk. If the PCs spend time hunting for more costly goods, a successful DC 15 Culture check which takes 5 minutes locates 2d6 bulk of goods worth 10 credits per bulk. If the PCs search, they can also find useful low-cost adventuring gear such as cable line or a medkit with a DC 20 Perception check.

CLOCKWORK ASSASSIN DRONES (2)

CR 3

XP 800 each

N Tiny construct (magic, technological)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +13

DEFENSE

HP 30 EACH

EAC 14; **KAC** 15

Fort +2; **Ref** +6; **Will** +2

DR 5/—; **Immunities** construct immunities

Weaknesses vulnerable to electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (Ex, perfect)

Melee sting +9 (1d4+5 P plus poison cache)

Offensive Abilities poison cache

TACTICS

Morale If reduced to less than 15 Hit Points, the drones will withdraw in an attempt to preserve their recordings.

STATISTICS

Str +2; **Dex** +4; **Con** —; **Int** +0; **Wis** +1; **Cha** +0

Skills Engineering +13, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +13, Survival +8

Languages Common (cannot speak)

Other Abilities recording, winding

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison Cache (Ex) The clockwork assassin drone can carry a dose of poison among its inner workings, to be injected with its sting. Extracting any unused doses of poison from a disabled drone takes one minute and a successful DC 23 Engineering check. On a failed check, the poison is instead destroyed. These particular drones are outfitted with blue whinnis.

Recording (Ex) A clockwork assassin drone can record whatever it can detect its vision and hearing, recording up to 2 hours of images and sounds before filling its data banks. These recordings can be played back on command, the drone projecting a three-dimensional image of the data, including recorded audio. The recording can skip forward or back as desired by whoever commands the drone.

Winding (Ex) Clockwork creations, must be wound up before they animate. The creator of a clockwork crafts a unique key for each creation. This key is typically inserted into the clockwork's back and turned clockwise to wind it. Turning the key counterclockwise has the effect of winding the machine down, though only a willing (or completely helpless) machine will allow itself to be unwound in this way, meaning either its creator or someone its creator has specifically designated can normally do so. Since each key is totally unique, construction of a new key (or bypassing a key entirely) requires a successful Engineering check (DC = 20 + the clockwork's CR).

REPAIRING THE GATE

With the help of the *Opus Aeterna*, repairing the gate proves surprisingly easy. The gate's components show no discernable damage, and the main task requires the reactivation of the gate's instrumentation panel after reigniting its internal power source. Realigning the gate's destination presents a more complex problem, however. Due to Kylorn's stopped rotation, the gate now has only one destination point available to it, and fine tuning the panel's sensors to Kylorn again takes significant work as the coordinates conflict with the gate's original orientation for the planet when it still had a planetary rotation and a different gravitational influence. Repairing the gate requires a single DC 20 Engineering checks to reattach the components and activate its power source and three DC 20 Mysticism or Culture checks (checks against either skill can be used to aid the creature making the primary check with either skill). Each check, whether or not it succeeds, requires 2d6 minutes to complete. If Keeper Axanar and his minions arrive (see **Complications**, p. 16) before the task is complete, they enter the warehouse stealthily and he tries to get into position to study one of the PCs to make a death attack, which is the signal for his allies to attack as well. If he or his allies are spotted, they fight to the death, flanking whenever possible, while sending one Night Watch guard back to the Thanex compound with descriptions of the PCs.

The gate activates correctly when the PCs trigger it, but the portal remains dark, giving no indication of what lies on the other side. Once the PCs pass through, they have a feeling of effortlessly falling from an incredible height into blackness.

All sense of time and space is lost as a strange numbing chill and a mournful vibration comes from all around. Tiny pinpoints of white light start to streak towards each PC, engulfing them in warmth and radiance that rises to a fiery brilliance. The metallic tang of ozone assails their senses and a tremendous sensation of raw energy surges through their bodies—a growing effect attributed to their legendary power. An instant later, each PC strikes solid ground with a suddenness that knocks the breath from their lungs.

Immediately upon arrival, the PCs' Morphic Nature feat alters their physical nature to suit this new environment. The air on Kylorn is cleaner than Argosa but much thinner, the equivalent of a thin atmosphere. Kylorn's gravity is only slightly heavier than that of Argosa. The PCs even acquire some adaption to Kylorn's extreme range of temperatures, ignoring dangers from temperatures between of 0 and 110 degrees F. This effect does not extend to their equipment, however.

Reward: The strange energies of the gate and the PC's increasing understanding of the *Opus Aeterna* grants each PC a legendary feat (pg. 94) of that player's choice.

PART TWO: THE DARK SIDE OF KYLORN

The PCs arrive on the world of Kylorn at one of the few gates which survived the ancient cataclysm that stopped the planet's rotation. Known locally as the Midnight Gate, the portal lies deep in the frozen night side of Kylorn, far from the thin band of habitability between it and the scorching day side of the planet. A new ecosystem has slowly reached equilibrium on the planet's surface. The day side remains too hot for habitation by most species, but not so super-heated as to boil away the atmosphere, leaving the landmasses there to become scorched, lifeless deserts. Likewise, the night side of the planet is now a dark, frozen wasteland. Primitive lifeforms gather around the heat of geothermal vents to survive the intense cold. Meanwhile, the habitability zone, known as the Sunset Lands, represents the best place for new life to sustain itself.

You stand on a low dais at the center of an empty stone concourse with a cold night sky above. Stretching out in all directions beyond is a dark and desolate arctic wilderness of ice and snow. Encircling you, inset into the stone on which you stand is a circular metallic frame imprinted with abstract symbols and ancient runes. A fierce wind shrieks, driving an icy sleet with the intensity of an impending blizzard. However, around the dais seems to be an oasis of refuge. No snow falls close to the dais, and the wind is merely a light breeze. Several hundred feet away the low crumbling remains of what must have been a building pushes through the surrounding sheet ice.

The gate structure is horizontal, embedded in the smooth surface of the surrounding stone platform on which the PCs stand. The gate provides a protective aura around itself in a 50 foot radius, keeping out the bitter freezing cold and reducing the force of the harsh boreal winds whistling across the ice. This protective field also prevents ice or snow from covering over the area. The temperature inside the gate's

aura is a chilly 25 degrees F, but due to the PCs' Morphic Nature this isn't even uncomfortable. However, outside the gate's aura of protection the temperature is bitterly cold (−75° F). These conditions function as extreme cold (see Cold Dangers in the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*) and are beyond the capacity of *life bubble* to resist. Freezing sleet hampers both vision and ranged attacks and the stone concourse gives way to slippery sheets of ice that slow movement (see Weather in the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*).

Attempting to interact with the gate, or realign it, isn't possible from here. The PCs need to find the gate control instruments which are most likely underground, somewhere underneath the gate. While the PCs might briefly consider exploring overland, the tremendous environmental hazards and lack of any other clear objective in sight should encourage them to move toward the ruins.

Creature: The activation of the gate has roused one of the elemental beings that inhabit this frozen wilderness. Irritated by the energy burst and unwelcome 'heat' from the gate's activation as well as the intrusion of unwelcome warm creatures, an ice elemental accosts the PCs as they get close to the ruins. The elemental swims through the thick sheet of ice which makes up the ice field surrounding the gate, bursts up behind the PCs and demands (in Aquan) that the PCs explain themselves and cease trespassing on its territory. The elemental starts with an attitude of hostile and angrily attacks unless the PCs can hastily defuse the situation.

Development: Reaching the ruins provides some cover from the freezing windblown sleet. The aboveground level of the building is in ruins, the fallen stones worn smooth by ages of exposure to the environment. However, a wide stairway leads down into a basement area.



HENDERSHOT

PART 2: THE DARK SIDE OF KYLORN

GREATER ICE ELEMENTAL

CR 9

XP 6,400

N Huge outsider (air, cold, ice, extraplanar, water)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., snow vision; **Perception** +17

DEFENSE

HP 145

EAC 22; **KAC** 24

Fort +11; **Ref** +11; **Will** +10

DR 10/—; **Immunities** cold, elemental immunities

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., burrow (ice and snow only) 20 ft., swim 60 ft., ice glide, ice walking

Melee slam +22 (2d10+15 B & C plus numbing cold)

Offensive Abilities numbing cold (DC 16)

STATISTICS

Str +6; **Dex** +3; **Con** +4; **Int** –1; **Wis** –; **Cha** –

Skills Athletics +17, Stealth +22

Languages Aquan

TACTICS

Morale The elemental retreats by diving back beneath the ice if reduced below 40 Hit Points.

ECOLOGY

Environment any land or water (Plane of Water)

Organization solitary, pair, or gang (3–8)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Ice Glide (Ex) A greater ice elemental can burrow through nonmagical ice and snow like a fish swims through water. This leaves no trace or tunnel. Casting a *control gravity* spell on the area where a greater ice elemental is burrowing flings the creature back 30 feet, stunning it for 1 round, unless it succeeds at a DC 15 Fortitude save.

Ice Walking (Ex) A greater ice elemental can climb icy surfaces as per the *spider climb* spell. It takes no penalty when doing so and does not need to make Acrobatics checks when running or charging on ice.

Numbing Cold (Su) Each time a greater ice elemental deals cold damage with its slam attack, the target must succeed on a Fortitude save or be staggered for one round.

Snow Vision (Ex) A greater ice elemental's vision is unaffected in snow and it suffers no penalties in snowy conditions.

B1. BASEMENT

Even though the stairs have some protection from the elements, a thick layer of ice obstructs the entryway at the base of the stairs. The ice is 5 feet thick but there is a faint light visible on the other side. The ice has hardness 0 and 900 Hit Points and may take the PCs some time to hack their way through. Inside is a tall bare chamber with two archways blocked by rubble and a set of circular steps leading down in its center. The temperature is less frigid than outside, only –40° F, which still qualifies as extreme cold for unprotected creatures but is within the capacity of *life bubble* to resist. Dim illumination comes from a smooth pale crystal (worth 50 credits) set

in the roof. It is imbued with magic that has faded over the long ages and now only gives out illumination the equivalent of a candle. The steps lead down for 150 feet before opening onto area B2.

B2. INTERSECTION

The steps from the surface open out here and the temperature here is slightly warmer, around 10° F.

B3. DIGGER JUNCTION (CR 9)

The roughhewn walls of this natural cavern show clear signs of expansion work by large digging implements. A series of perfectly circular passageways exit the chamber.

Creatures: A pair of tunnel digging constructs were left stored here long ago in the in the east and west side tunnels and time has covered them in a thick layer of dust and mineral debris. However, these automatons are still fully functional and the last order given to them was to defend against intruders.

Treasure: The tips of the drillers are fitted with adamantite drill bits worth 1,500 credits each.



DARK SIDE TUNNELS

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



PART 2: THE DARK SIDE OF KYLORN

ANIMATED DRILLERS (2)

CR 7

XP 3,200 each

N Huge construct (magic)

Init -2; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +14

DEFENSE

HP 105 EACH

EAC 19; KAC 22

Fort +6; Ref +6; Will +6

DR 5/adamantine; Immunities construct immunities

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.

Melee drills +17 (2d6+12 P)

Space 15 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Offensive Abilities trample (2d6+12 B, DC 15)

TACTICS

During Combat They attack using their trample ability as soon as they notice the PCs.

Morale The drillers are incapable of surrender.

STATISTICS

Str +6; Dex -2; Con —; Int —; Wis +0; Cha +0

ANCIENT BASE

This area was once a secret base built to protect the gate's controls during the ancient war and to prevent it falling to the enemy. This part of the planet was once a remote forested wilderness far away from any city. While the gate itself is immovably locked into its position on the surface, the ancient Kylornians built their base underground to make it harder to spot from the air.

An ancient enchantment covers the entire underground base but not the trapped area in front of the portal. Despite its age, this effect still prevents extradimensional travel (including *dimension door* and *teleport*).

B4. ENTRANCE PORTAL (CR 10)

A huge metallic portal blocks the end of a wide walkway. It shows no signs of corrosion or rust in spite of the copious layer of dust which covers the floor and exposed surfaces of the chamber. At the western end of the walkway rests a small pile of dusty remains.

The small pile is a set of humanoid bone shards that have been cleanly cut into small pieces. Joining pieces of skull together and succeeding at a DC 20 Medicine check reveals this is the remains of a tretharri. The tretharri was part of a group who came through the intermittent portal to Argosa when it was still operating. When this tretharri fell prey to the trap, the group's survivors retreated after taking anything of value from their fallen companion's body. The portal is a foot thick, made of an incredibly durable alloy, and has been magically treated. It is also locked with a superior lock and warded with an *security seal* spell. The portal has hardness 25, Hit Points 720, break DC 53 (or 48 if the *security seal* is suppressed), and Engineering DC 39 (or 34 if *security seal* is suppressed). Digging through the nearby walls is somewhat

easier but these have been magically treated (CL 15th) and enhanced to resist spells. They have SR 21 and gain a saving throw against spells that could affect them (save bonus +10). Fifteen feet in front of the walkway under a flagstone (marked as X on the map) is a panel containing a carved magical glyph (DC 35 Perception check to find). This glyph can be used to deactivate the trap on the portal.

Trap: Anyone moving adjacent to the portal triggers a trap. Two *walls of force* spring up, one directly in front of the portal, the other 20 feet in front of the first, blocking off the passage. A wall of whirling blades also appears next to the southern *wall of force*. Each round, the blades moves from one end of the area to the other and anyone trapped in the area between the two walls of force takes damage as if they had passed through the blades.

Activating a magical glyph hidden under a floor panel (marked as X on the map) neutralizes the trap. The procedure to activate the glyph was lost long ago but a successful DC 25 Mysticism check can blindly activate it, which disables the trap indefinitely. Attempting to find or activate the hidden glyph requires a full-round action, but can be reattempted each round without penalty. There was also another magical procedure to reactivate the trap using the glyph but this has also been lost to the ages.

After twelve rounds, the trap's remaining power runs down and it becomes inactive. Once the trap is deactivated by time or the rune, the door can be opened normally.

SLICING BARRICADE

CR 10

XP 9,600

Type magic; Perception DC 35; Disable Mysticism DC 30

Bypass hidden glyph (Perception DC 35 to find; Mysticism DC 25 to activate)

EFFECTS

Trigger sight (*true seeing*); Reset automatic (immediate)

Effect spell effects (two *wall of force* spells, hardness 30, 300 HP); wall of blades, 10d6 damage, Reflex DC 19 for half; multiple targets (all targets in a 20-ft.-by-15-ft. area); duration 12 rounds

B5. SECURITY BARRIER (CR 9)

Seismic disturbances in the past have triggered this two stage security barrier in the corridor. This barrier is controlled by a combination of technology and magic, and while it was originally designed to merely block the corridor in case of an emergency, the malfunctioning controls now make it potentially lethal. The first stage is a heavy metallic barrier that rises on runners up into a slot in the ceiling. Currently this part of the barrier is down and but is free to slide up or down, it does not lock in place even if raised. It is extremely heavy, weighing 1,000 lbs. It is 3 inches thick and has hardness 10, Hit Points 90, break DC 28. Once lifted, it exposes the barrier's second stage, another barrier of similar construction that splits vertically in two and slides into slots on either

side of the corridor. This second stage is secured with a large locking device in the center of the barrier (Engineering DC 30). The lock has multiple security mechanisms and requires two successful Engineering checks to open.

Trap: As soon as the first barrier is raised the barrier's magical sensors detect this and unless the PCs either quickly disable the trap or unlock the second barrier, 3 rounds after the first barrier is raised the trap triggers. In the round before the trap, a recording triggers shouting "Warning, danger!" in an ancient language the PCs can understand due to their Morphic Nature feat. Remember that disabling a trap or opening a lock with Engineering requires one full action.

ELECTRIC SHOCK TRAP

CR 9

XP 6,400

Type magical and mechanical; Perception DC 30; Disable Engineering DC 26

EFFECTS

Trigger touch (see text); Reset automatic

Effect electric shock (4d10 electricity damage each round of contact, Reflex DC 25 half); onset delay (3 rounds); multiple targets (all targets in contact with either barrier); duration 1 minute

B6. TRAPPED ARMORY (CR 10)

A passage opens into a small space with alcoves inset into the walls on both sides. A web of deep cracks crisscrosses the compartment's ceiling and walls. A heavily corroded metal door dominates the far wall.

This was once a security checkpoint at the entrance to an armory where weapons and other important gear were stored. Both the door and its lock mechanism are fused and rusted solidly shut. The rusted door is 3 inches thick, has hardness 7, Hit Points 65, Break DC 28. The combination of an unstable ceiling and the vault's magical trap makes this area a potent danger.

Hazard: One of the main dangers here is the unstable roof; the door is currently providing structural support for the weakened ceiling and breaking open the door causes the roof to collapse moments after the PCs smash it open. PCs who examine the room may notice the weak ceiling with a successful DC 20 Engineering check and characters with the stonemasonry racial trait (such as most dwarves) notice automatically.

Trap: Beyond the door, the vault's magical defenses are still intact. Opposite the door is an ancient rune set to trigger if it sights unauthorized personnel. When the PCs break or otherwise open the door, the rune triggers, affecting everyone within 60 feet. The PCs weakened by the trap find it much harder to pull other PCs out of the rubble and PCs that are both weakened and buried may find it almost impossible to dig themselves out. The PCs' intrusion also triggers a recorded message that repeatedly yells, "Intruders!" for 3 minutes in an ancient language which the PCs can understand due to their Morphic Nature feat, but this is likely the least of their problems.

Treasure: Much of the vault's useful weaponry and contents were removed in the distant past or have crumbled to uselessness over time but buried underneath a pile of corroded melee weapons is an adamantite alloy advanced doshko, and in one corner covered in layers of dust are 4 *atmosphere visors* (see page 80). In addition, buried beneath rubble (DC 20 Perception check to notice) is a stone box containing an *energy projection* (see page 80) *static shock truncheon*. This box was once secured with an elaborate locking mechanism that has long since corroded shut, but it can be pried open with a successful DC 18 Strength check.

CAVE-IN/COLLAPSE

CR 8

XP 4,800

Type hazard; Notice Engineering DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger breaking down the vault door; Reset none

Effect 15-foot radius bury zone centered on vault door plus 10-foot-wide slide zone beyond that; bury zone (automatically buried, 8d6 damage, Reflex DC 15 for half), slide zone (3d6 damage and buried, Reflex DC 15 negates); multiple targets (all targets within 25 ft.)

CURSE OF WEAKNESS TRAP

CR 8

XP 4,800

Type magic; Perception DC 32; Disable Mysticism DC 27

EFFECTS

Trigger spell; Reset none

Effect curse of weakness (–10 penalty to Strength including reduced carrying capacity, DC 20 Fortitude save negates, can be cured with *remove affliction*); multiple targets (all targets within 60 ft.)

B7. GATE CONTROL CENTER (CR 10)

Four passages, one from each of the cardinal directions enter this circular domed room. In the center of the area is a raised dais with a large cylindrical machine made of smooth curving metal and fluted crystals that reaches up to the ceiling. While dusty, the device itself seems unblemished by the passage of time. There are runes etched into the machine and a set of controls on the western side with a delicate cubic framework above them.

This is the control device for the gate up on the surface above. The controls are currently shut down but are still functional and can be reactivated (see Development below).

Haunt: A haunt manifests when a living creature enters the chamber, showing an event from the cataclysm during the End of Time. Unlike many normal haunts, the PCs have the chance to interact with this event and can even prevent some of the haunt's effects. As legendary heroes, the PCs can potentially affect the result of the haunt, which in turn affects how events actually played out in the past!

When this haunt triggers, a ghostly translucent scene forms, overlaying itself over the chamber and its contents as described below:

PART 2: THE DARK SIDE OF KYLORN

In the surprise round, the scene shows a pair of robed humans with angular features standing at the gate controls. The framework above the equipment is illuminated and shows a three dimensional image of the gate on the surface above. However, this shows a sunny day in a temperate climate with trees in the background. On the projection, a wary group of soldiers in ornate armor are protectively escorting what looks like a group of nervous civilians toward the steps leading up to the gate. Suddenly, an immense shadow covers the sun and both the pair of humans and the group on the screen fall as the entire world seems to tilt on an angle. Of the pair in the chamber, the robed woman manages to catch herself by grabbing a protuberance on the floor, while the man lands heavily, injuring himself. She yells, "It's an attack!" The PCs can understand her words due to their Morphic Nature feat.

At the start of the next round, on the screen, some of the civilians and soldiers have managed to grab on to something, and are huddled on the steps leading up to the gate frantically clinging to each other. The robed man shouts, "We've got to open the gate!" as he frantically struggles to find something grab onto and then slides away down into the eastern passage. The woman desperately tries to hold on and pull herself up the gate equipment.

Next round, the woman makes some progress climbing, but then loses her grip as the chamber's gravity increases and she hangs swaying by only one hand. The scene on the display shows massive pieces of debris flying through the air and incredible winds buffeting the group on the surface.

In the last round of the haunt, depending on the PCs' actions, the woman either manages to climb up and press the control to activate the gate at the end of the round, or her grip gives out and she falls. If she successfully manages to press the control then the PCs can catch a glimpse on the screen of civilians diving into activated gate and disappearing. If the PCs aided her, the woman may look around and stare straight at the PCs for an instant as if she can actually see them. Gravity returns to normal at the end of the round as all light sources, including those carried by the PCs, are extinguished. Nonmagical light sources can be relit normally and magical light sources reactivate after one round.

CHANGE THE PAST?

While it may not be obvious, due to their legendary nature the PCs can influence the events in front of them. While the robed pair are in a different time and are virtually insubstantial to the PCs, this doesn't mean that the PCs can't aid them. While the PCs pass intangibly through the robed pair of gatekeepers if they try to touch them, there is however a faint resistance.

A PC who is close enough to interact with one of the figures can make a DC 20 check using appropriate skill to assist them, similar to using the Aid Another rules. For example, a

PC climbing next a figure could make an Athletics check to assist, a flying creature could make a Acrobatics check, or a PC who casts a spell such as *fly* on one of the figures could aid by making a Mysticism check. This aid only has a small effect on the gatekeeper and is barely noticeable, but this may be enough to change the scene's outcome. One thing that won't work is for the PCs to simply press the gate controls, it has to be a gatekeeper that reaches up and activates the gate. If the PCs succeed at two or more checks to assist before the haunt's final effect activates then the woman succeeds at activating the gate and the haunt is immediately destroyed.

GM Note: Placing miniatures for the gatekeepers on the battlemat may help key the players into the idea that their characters can interact with these 'ethereal' humanoids. Also consider allowing the PCs to make DC 20 Culture or Mysticism checks to recognize that this is an unusual temporal phenomenon and not a normal haunt and that it may be possible to meaningfully interact with it.

Reward: If the PCs succeed in heroically altering the events of the past then those PCs who aided the gatekeepers and rescued the ancient Kylornians from the End of Time gain a potent temporal boon in return. This boon is temporal glitch that triggers automatically when the PC is about to die. At the moment that would be that character's death, they can take one full round of actions as time is frozen around them. This can even happen retroactively, a PC hit by an attack dealing enough damage to kill him or her, sees time slow to a crawl as the attack commences, giving that PC the chance to avoid it. Each PC can make use of this boon's benefit only once.

Development: Examining the gate controls here reveals numerous useful facts. This gate is actually only a secondary gate; it receives much of its power and many of its major functions from a primary gate which is elsewhere on the planet. This also means that the primary gate must still be active. The secondary gate can only have its destination recalibrated or changed at the primary gate. If the PCs have figured out that the planet they are on is tidally locked then the reason for why aligning this gateway has been so difficult begins to make sense. The gates need to be recalibrated to compensate for Kylorn's lack of rotation. Until this is done, the two ends of the gate to Argosa will only line up intermittently, approximately once every couple of months and even then only for around an hour or so. While the map schematics aren't to scale, it appears that the primary gate is literally on the other side of the planet.

TEMPORAL DISASTER

CR 10

XP 9,600

Notice Perception DC 20 (to notice small earth tremors and a slight shift in the gravitational pull)

HP 40; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** none

EFFECTS

In the first round the chamber becomes a high gravity area with much of this increase coming from the east wall, making the room seem to tilt on an angle. Treat the room's angle as a

severe slope for Acrobatics. The gravity increase means that all creatures in the chamber now weigh twice as much, can only move at half speed, jump only half as far as normal, and can lift and carry only half as much as normal. The range increment of ranged weapons is halved.

On the second round, the gravitational effects intensify dramatically. Treat the chamber's gravity as if the east wall is now the ceiling and the west wall is the floor. Falling creatures now take 1d10 damage for every 10 feet fallen. All Acrobatics and Athletics checks take a 2 circumstance penalty, as do as attack rolls. Any flying creature has its maneuverability worsened by two steps (from good to poor, for example; minimum clumsy) and plummets to the ground unless it succeeds at a DC 25 Acrobatics check to remain in the air.

On the third round, all creatures in the area must succeed at a DC 20 Reflex save or take 13d10 falling damage, those that succeed take half damage. Creatures take this damage regardless of their position in the chamber and even if they are flying or otherwise unable to fall.

DESTRUCTION

Assisting the gatekeepers to activate the gate destroys this haunt.

B8. TRANSPORT PLATFORM (CR 10)

Rubble strewn steps descend into a wide corridor with a structured trench next to it. In the trench is a 30 foot long cylindrical device of glass and metal. In spite of its obviously massive weight, the huge device magically floats in the trench several feet above the bottom. At the end of the trench a circular passage disappears off into darkness.

This platform was once used to transport Kylornians vast distances underground during the ancient war. The cylindrical device is a transport tube that moves at great speed through the network of tunnels below the surface. Sliding doors in the sides of the device allow the PCs to enter and there is plenty of seating for dozens of Medium-sized creatures.

Creatures: One of the many monstrosities released during the ancient war to exterminate Kylorn's population was the sinister lurking ray. These aberrations survived the End of Time and multiplied. A male and a female have migrated here to perform a complex mating ritual, the female trapper has dug out the marked section of the bottom of the steps and the male ascendant lurker has carved away part of the ceiling above the female. Much of the rubble from this excavation has been concealed in the trench underneath the transport tube. Angry at being interrupted, the two creatures attack as soon as at least one PC reaches the base of the steps.

Development: The ancient transport tube still functions after all this time. A combination of spells effects, including a permanent *flight* spell provide the motive power for the device. Thankfully it operates with very little interaction from a driver. Activating the device requires some knowledge of ancient artifacts, but fortunately the *Opus Aeterna* can assist here. Once the device is activated and directed to move, the doors close and it moves along the tunnel gradually

accelerating to a tremendous speed. The transport device has benches and seats for sitting or resting, the temperature is pleasant, and there are private alcoves for waste disposal. There is no food but the other features serve to make the long journey bearable. The device can detect obstructions in the tunnel ahead at long distances and automatically slows to avoid striking any obstacle.

ASCENDANT LURKER

CR 8

XP 3,200

N Huge aberration

Init +0; **Senses** blindsense (vibration) 10 ft., blindsight (scent) 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +16

DEFENSE

HP 125

EAC 19; KAC 21

Fort +9; **Ref** +9; **Will** +6

DR 10/piercing or slashing; **Resistances** cold 10, fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., climb 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (Ex, poor)

Melee slam +17 (3d4+14 B plus grab)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Offensive Abilities smother

STATISTICS

Str +6; **Dex** +0; **Con** +2; **Int** -4; **Wis** +4; **Cha** +0

Skills Athletics +16, Stealth +21

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Smother (Ex) When an ascendant lurker grapples a target, it forms an airtight seal around its prey. A grappled target cannot speak or cast spells, and, if it has no means of self-contained breathing, must hold its breath.

TRAPPER

CR 9

XP 4,800

N Huge aberration

Init +0; **Senses** blindsense (vibration) 10 ft., blindsight (scent) 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +21

DEFENSE

HP 135

EAC 21; KAC 23

Fort +10; **Ref** +10; **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities amorphous; **DR** 10/piercing or slashing;

Resistances cold 10, fire 10

Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., climb 5 ft.

Melee slam +19 (3d4+14 B plus grab)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Offensive Abilities constrict (3d4+14), smother

STATISTICS

Str +6; **Dex** +0; **Con** +4; **Int** +0; **Wis** +2; **Cha** +0

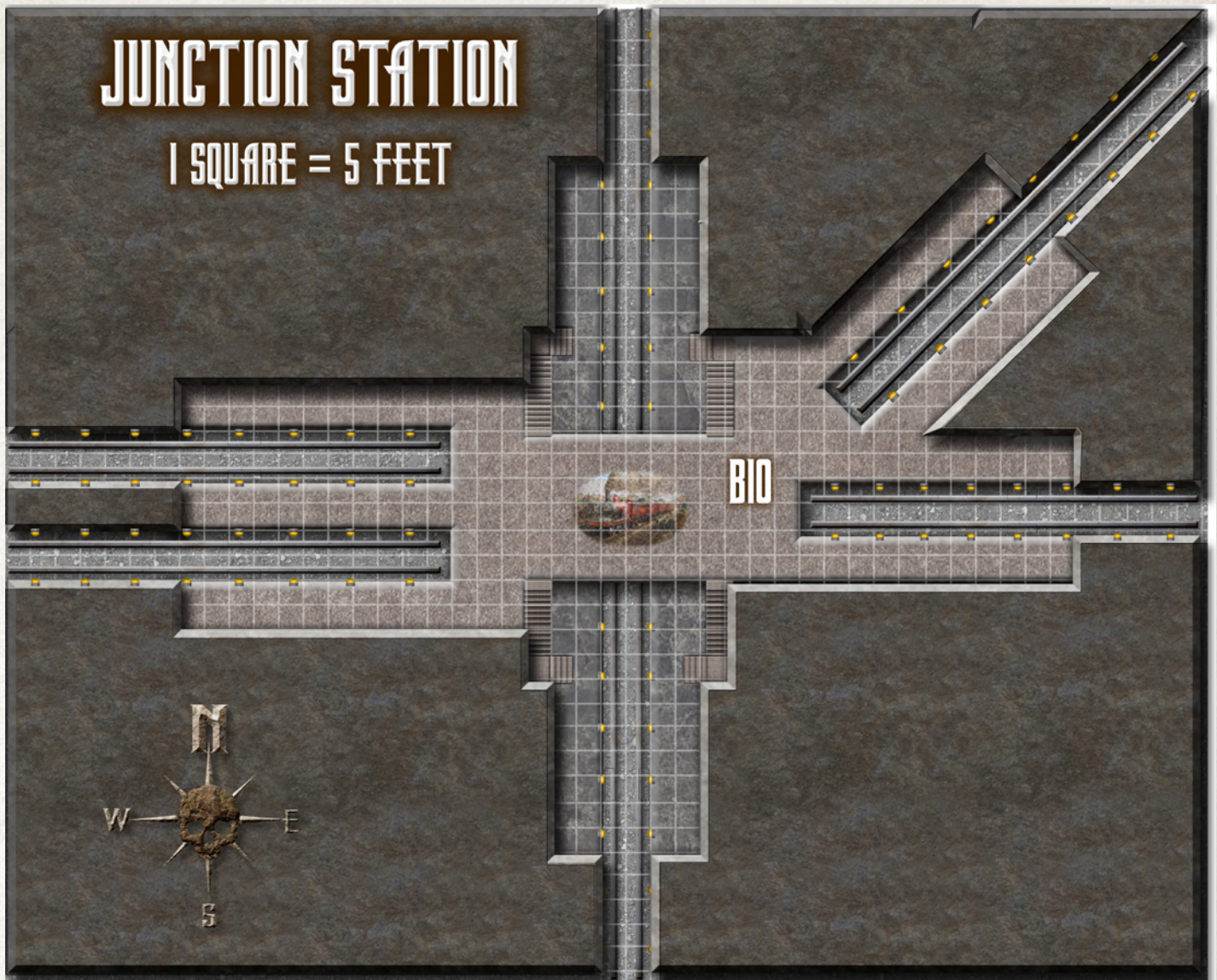
Skills Athletics +16, Sense Motive +16, Stealth +21 (+26 in rocky areas)

Languages Aklo, Common, Undercommon

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground

Organization solitary

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

Light Sensitivity (Ex) A trapper is dazzled for as long as it remains in areas of bright light.

Smother (Ex) When a trapper grapples a target, it forms an airtight seal around its prey. A grappled target cannot speak or cast spells, and, if it has no means of self-contained breathing, must hold its breath.

AROUND THE WORLD

This tunnel extends a massive distance, leading toward Kylorn's habitability zone but it hasn't been used by a transport tube since the war long ago. Even at the incredible speed that the transport tube can achieve, it still takes a roughly 8 days to make this journey across thousands of miles. The PCs occasionally spot side tunnels leading off from the main transport tunnel, but these flash by in an instant and are outside the scope of this adventure. The journey itself is monotonous, except on the fifth day when the tube rapidly decelerates, startling the

PCs but not causing any harm. The transport tube stops 100 feet short of a blockage in the tunnel up ahead.

B9. TUNNEL BENEATH THE OCEAN (CR 11)

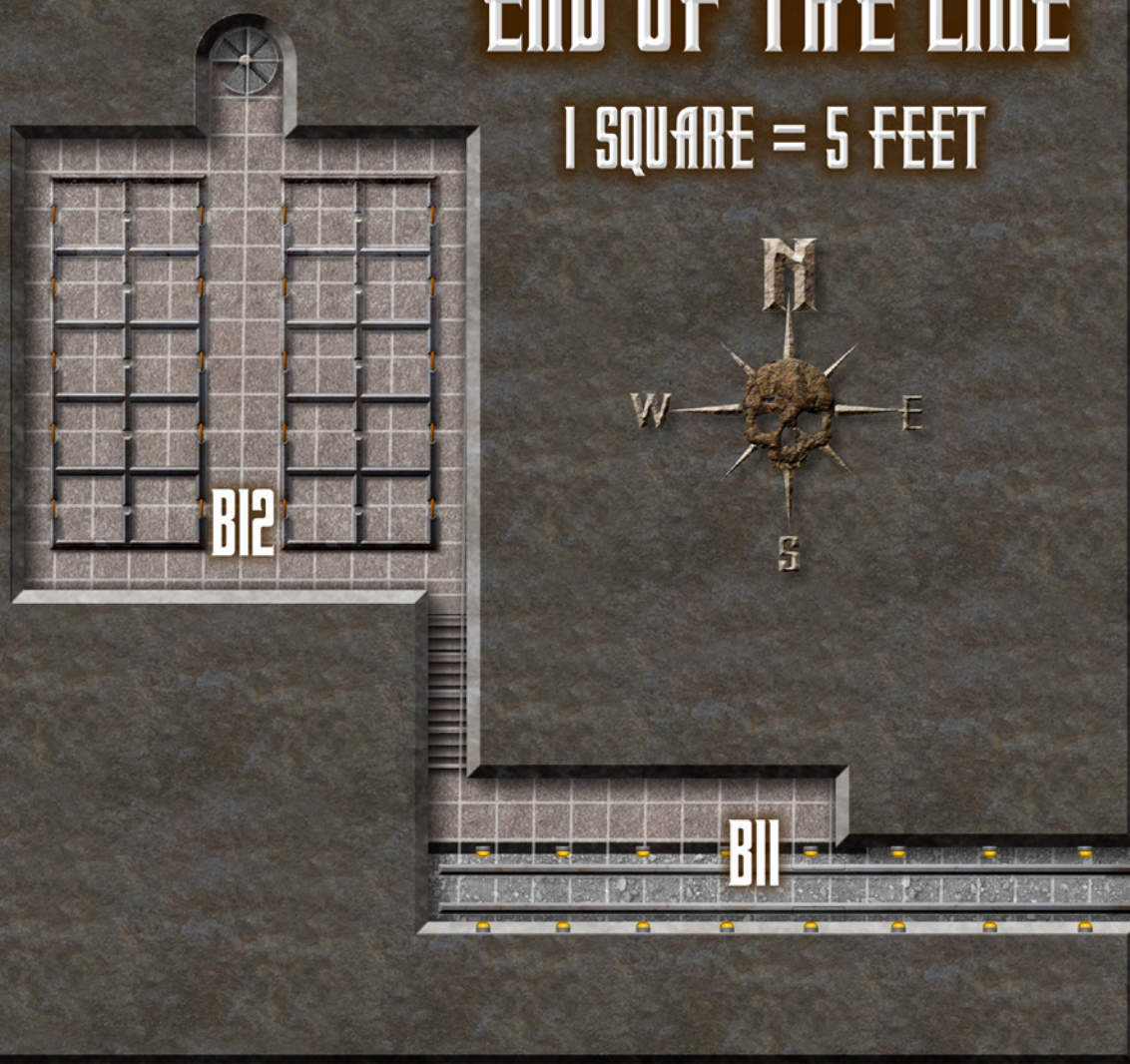
This area is strewn with layers of glistening crystal formations as well as a profusion of stalagmites and stalagmites which obstruct much of the tunnel. The sound of dripping water hangs in the dank air.

This area of the tunnel is not marked on the map. This region lies deep underneath one of Kylorn's oceans and a combination of geological forces combined with condensation and water seepage over the ages have slowly formed these mineral formations. The obstructions on the floor of the cavern make it difficult terrain and the dampness makes surfaces slightly slippery (+2 to the DC of Acrobatics checks).

Creature: Drawn to this area because of its high concentration of certain mineral elements, a carnivorous crystal lurks in the middle of the area among the stalactites

END OF THE LINE

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



on the roof 20 feet above. The sentient crystal remains behind cover and attacks as soon as a PC gets within 20 feet of it.

Treasure: A DC 15 Physical Science or Profession (miner) check recognizes clusters of glimmering crystalline formations as a seams of valuable gemstones. There are a total of 900 credits of citrine, quartz, and tourmaline crystals to be found here.

Development: Getting the transport past this blockage requires 16 person-hours of hard work clearing the track but certain spells, such as *stone shape*, can help significantly with this.

CARNIVOROUS CRYSTAL

CR 11

XP 12,800

N Medium ooze (earth, extraplanar)

Init -5; **Senses** blindsight (vibration) 120 ft.; **Perception** +20

Aura subsonic hum (60 ft., DC 18)

DEFENSE

HP 180

EAC 24; **KAC** 26

Fort +15; **Ref** +11; **Will** +8

DR 10/—; **Immunities** cold, electricity, ooze immunities;

Resistances fire 20

Weaknesses brittle, vulnerable to sonic

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

Melee slam +23 (4d6+19 P & S plus entrap; critical 2d6 bleed)

Offensive Abilities crystallize, entrap (DC 18, 1d10 rounds, hardness 10, HP 10)

STATISTICS

Str +8; **Dex** -5; **Con** +5; **Int** —; **Wis** +3; **Cha** -5

Skills Athletics +25, Stealth +20 (+25 in rocky environs)

Other Abilities freeze, mindless, split (critical hit from bludgeoning or sonic attacks, 18 HP)

PART 2: THE DARK SIDE OF KYLORN

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground

Organization solitary, colony (2–4), or formation (5–10)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Brittle (Ex) Bludgeoning and sonic attacks can inflict critical hits on a carnivorous crystal. A successful critical hit from such attacks causes the carnivorous crystal to split, even if the attack causes no damage. The crystal remains immune to precision-based damage, such as damage from sneak attacks.

Crystallize (Ex) A creature entrapped by a carnivorous crystal's attack must succeed at a DC 16 Fortitude save each round or become helpless. If a helpless creature fails this save, it becomes petrified as its body crystallizes. In 1d4 hours, the petrified victim shatters and a new carnivorous crystal emerges from the remains.

Entrap (Ex) A carnivorous crystal's attack encases its target in crystal and restricts the creature's movement. The target must make a DC 18 Fortitude save or become entangled for the listed duration. If a target is already entangled by this ability, a second entrap attack means the target must make a Fortitude save or become helpless for the listed duration. A target made helpless by this ability is conscious but can take no physical actions (except attempting to break free) until the entrapping material is removed. An entangled creature can make a Strength check (at the same DC as the entrap saving throw DC) as a full action to break free; the DC for a helpless creature is +5 greater than the saving throw DC. Destroying the entrapping material frees the creature.

Subsonic Hum (Su) An active carnivorous crystal gives off supernatural sonic vibrations. Any living creature starting its turn within this aura must succeed at a DC 18 Fortitude save or be stunned for 1 round. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected by the same carnivorous crystal's subsonic hum for 24 hours. This is a sonic mind-affecting effect.

B10. JUNCTION STATION (CR 10)

Eventually the transport tube slows and arrives at its destination, one of a series of connected open platforms with transport tunnels spreading out in a half a dozen directions. The PCs can alight from their tube and start to explore, but the strong breeze and noise of their arrival has already awoken a deadly mechanical weapon that scourged this area of life in a past age.

Creatures: Two swarms of insectoid robots known as amalgamites lurk here. Having completed their mission to eradicate all opposition in the station area long ago and not having received any new orders since, the swarms have been dormant for millennia. Unfortunately in

order to maintain themselves the amalgamites have slowly devoured all the transport tubes that were once here as well as every speck of metal in the area. The swarms are initially dispersed in the lower platform area, but quickly reform and scuttle forward to follow the last instruction they were given: destroy all living creatures!

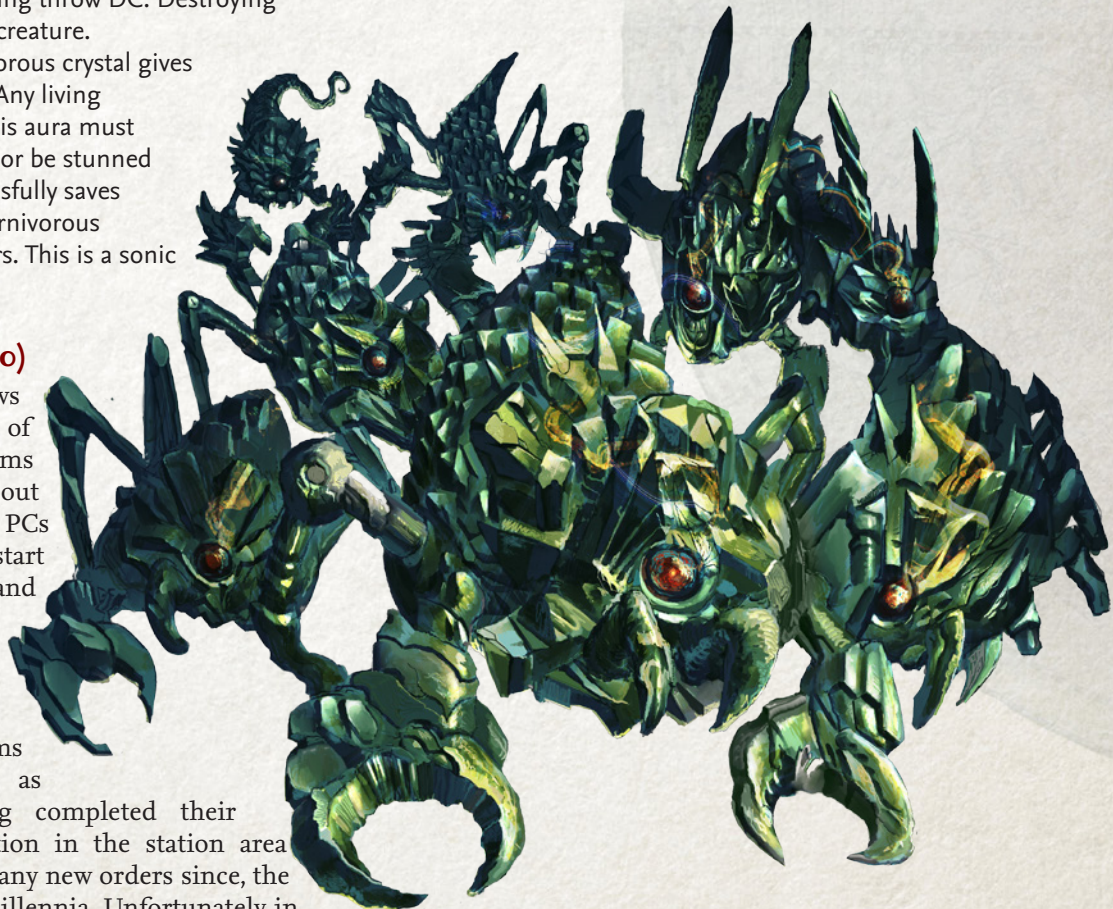
Development: Moving through the area, the PCs definitely notice the lack of any metal but they also discover an informative mosaic in the floor at the center of the connecting walkways. Time and the elements have both done substantial damage to the mosaic but the PCs can recognize that it represents a directional map of the surrounding tunnels. While much of the mosaic is illegible, the PCs can decipher the symbol for 'surface exit' from the northeastern tunnel. The transport tube the PCs arrived in only services the tunnel leading back to the Midnight Gate. So unless the PCs can come up with an incredible plan to shift the massive transport tube over to another tunnel, walking is the most likely option. The PCs may consider exploring some other tunnels, but given the distances these tunnels stretch this is likely to be a very long side trek.

AMALGAMITE SWARMS (2)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

HP 125 each (see page 73)





B11. SUFFOCATION TUNNEL

The northeastern transport tunnel is only 60 miles long but much of it is permeated with an invisible danger, air which is filled with low-oxygen gases. Noticing this hazard requires a DC 25 Survival check. Creatures breathing the air must make Fortitude saves (DC 15 + 1 per previous check) each hour or become fatigued. After a creature becomes fatigued, slow suffocation sets in. Medium creatures can breathe easily in this area for 6 hours, but after that begin taking 1d6 points of nonlethal damage every 15 minutes. Each additional Medium character or significant fire source (a torch, for example) proportionally reduces the time the air will last. Once rendered unconscious through the accumulation of nonlethal damage, the character begins to take lethal damage at the same rate. Small characters consume half as much air as Medium characters. There are various means for the PCs to circumvent this danger including *air bubble* spells or the *air visors* that the PCs may have found in the dark side base.

Hazard: Thirty miles along the tunnel is the cause of the lack of oxygen in the tunnel, a magical hazard known as an asphyxiation mote. This floating black planar rent sucks

oxygen from its surroundings leaving only unbreathable gases behind. Another remnant of the ancient war, this hazard is immobile but it hangs 20 feet above the tunnels floor making it more difficult to access.

ASPHYXIATION MOTE

CR 8

XP 4,800

Type hazard; Notice Perception DC 20

EFFECTS

Effect Any living air breathing creatures within 30 feet of an asphyxiation mote have the oxygen sucked from their bodies. This works as normal suffocation, except that it can draw oxygen directly from creature's lungs, requiring Constitution checks immediately. The asphyxiation mote emits a shrieking tone, making it easy for any creature that can hear to locate. Immersing an asphyxiation mote in water for 1 minute destroys it, as does a targeted *dispel magic* (DC 21).

PART 3: THE SUNSET KINGDOMS

B12. RETURN TO THE SURFACE (CR 9)

The transport tube tunnel finishes at another platform. Following the stairs up from the platform leads to a series of small interconnected cubicles what might have been offices or living areas in the past but time has turned any furnishings which were once here into dust. At the far end of these, a stone door that stands ajar leads into a spiraling stone staircase going up. The stairs ascend for hundreds of feet but have broken off in parts including the bottom 40 feet of stairs, leaving a large pile of stones and rubble at the base of the shaft. The walls of the stairwell are smooth, but the broken remnants of stairs provide plenty of handholds (DC 15 Athletics checks).

Creature: A living bioweapon from the ancient war lairs here. This toxic eradicator often ventures out into the many tunnels and vaults that run beneath the surface of the planet, but it always instinctively returns here, where it finds the small air vents which run between the rooms reassuring. The toxic eradicator attempts to ambush the PCs as they move through the area using the air vents to get behind them.

Development: At the top of the stairwell is small chamber with a sealed stone cap in the ceiling with a series of inset handholds leading up to it. There are 8 feet of dirt on top of the cap making it nearly impossible for the PCs to lift, but it can be broken through (hardness 8, 360 Hit Points). A cascade of dirt falls but eventually the PCs get to see the sunlight of Kylorn for the first time.

Story Award: The PCs should reach level 9 after defeating the toxic eradicator and returning to the surface (if they have not already).

TOXIC ERADICATOR

CR 9

XP 6,400

HP 145 (see page 79)

TACTICS

During Combat The eradicator focuses its attacks on one PC until he or she is dead.

Morale The eradicator withdraws using the air vents if reduced below 50 Hit Points or if all the remaining PCs seem to be immune to its poisons. If the PCs chase it, the eradicator retreats up the stairwell, striking with hit and run tactics if the PCs are unable to swiftly ascend past the broken area of stairs. If near death, the eradicator flies back out to the platform and flees the area for good.

PART THREE: THE SUNSET KINGDOMS

When the PCs arrive on the surface in the Sunset Lands they find themselves in a rural area near a small village called Cludin which is part of an agrarian monarchy named Gamraeg. The PCs can interact with astonished farmers and learn a little of the world they now travel through. Even though the PCs understand the common language, the locals speak it with a noticeable accent which is likely to make the PCs stand out as strangers even if they try to disguise

themselves. This is because the PC's Morphic Nature feat has given the PCs the knowledge of an ancient version of the Kylornian language and the natives have slowly changed and modified the language over time.

TELL THE TALE (CR 5)

Whether the PCs actively draw attention to themselves or not, word about them spreads and a well-traveled lyricist named Kery Briona hears of the PCs and then seeks them out. Kery is currently wandering, seeking worthy material to compose what he hopes will become an epic ballad which will make him famous and earn him a fortune.

Kery cautiously approaches the PCs astride his narav lizard, shouting out his peaceful intentions and setting aside his weapons when he draws near. If the PCs are hostile, he flees, but assuming they hear him out Kery dismounts and engages them in conversation. Kery is happy to answer any questions he can as long as the PCs reciprocate a little to help satisfy his own curiosity. When the PCs tell him of what they seek, Kery explains that only the Oracle would know things as unusual as what the PCs describe.

Kery offers to personally guide the PCs to the Citadel of the Oracle. He is well known throughout Gamraeg and the surrounding kingdoms as a likeable rascal and travelling with him smooths over much of the apprehension that the Kylornian natives may otherwise have toward the strange and alien PCs. As Kery gets to know the PCs, he starts to see them as the heroic main protagonists in his ballad, and as a rakishly handsome young man, he may also find himself becoming romantically involved with one or more of the PCs. Kery is quickly able to procure domesticated narav lizards as mounts for the PCs to speed their travel as well as basic food and lodgings if the PCs require. While travelling, Kery can describe what is commonly known about the surrounding lands and the PCs' destination, the Citadel of the Oracle.

While Kery is a confident and plucky fellow he's also well aware of his own mortality; he sings about legendary heroes but he certainly doesn't believe he is one himself. When the PCs reach their destination, Kery is happy to stay and mind the lizards while the PCs perform their heroic deeds. If asked, he is willing to go with the PCs into the Citadel but he points out that he isn't a powerful warrior like the PCs are, and knows that he should stay at the back to provide support. Whether or not Kery follows the PCs into the citadel, he offers up two of his serums of healing.

When the PCs decide to approach the Palace of Eternal Sunset, Kery is extremely apprehensive, telling the PCs what little he knows about the place, and stating that to his knowledge no one in living memory has ever gone into the palace and returned. He still offers his blessing in the form of serums before parting ways with them a number of miles from the Palace. Kery tells the PCs he will make a concealed camp here and wait at least a week for their return before he regretfully assumes they have perished.

KERY BRIONA

CR 5

XP 1,600

Male human envoy

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; Perception +11

DEFENSE

HP 85

EAC 15; KAC 16

Fort +3; Ref +3; Will +7

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee tactical spear +10 (1d6+4 P)

Ranged corona laser pistol +12 (2d4+4 F; critical burn 1d4)

Offensive Abilities hurry, inspiring boost

TACTICS

During Combat Kery does his best to stay out of combat, providing support from the rear with his hurry and inspiring boost envoy improvisations.

Morale If a member of the group falls unconscious, he does his best to pull them out of combat. If all the heroes fall, he's not too proud to flee.

STATISTICS

Str +0; Dex +2; Con +0; Int +5; Wis +1; Cha +3

Skills Culture +11, Diplomacy +11, Medicine +16, Survival +16, Profession (storyteller) +16

Languages Common, Draconic

Gear estex suit II, corona laser pistol with 1 battery (20 charges), tactical spear, 3 mk 2 serums of healing

NARAV LIZARD

CR 3

XP 800

HP 40 (see page 78)

CITADEL OF THE ORACLE

The Citadel of the Oracle is a long stone building complex built to catch as much sun as possible in its large windows. Various support buildings and housing surround the main building. The place gives the appearance of a monastery or temple but it is a secular place, similar in some ways to a university, devoted to the proliferation of knowledge, wisdom, and learning. The Citadel is positioned on the border between several of the larger Sunset Kingdoms and is a neutral entity offering improvements and peaceful technologies to improve the lives of all nearby lands.

The Citadel is an important focal point for the Servitors, a diverse society of constructs, including clockwork automatons, intelligent golems, and the divymm, who all served the Patrons prior to the End of Time. The Servitors were charged with guarding over knowledge repositories and alien libraries of ancient knowledge, many of which are still sealed in vaults far beneath the surface. Some of these vaults also serve as a storehouse of the evolutionary 'seed materials' which the Patrons used to foster new life on other planets. The Servitors tapped into this resource in an effort to re-seed the surface world and continue carrying out the purpose the

Patrons set for them, and it was here at the Citadel that they initiated this reseeded process. Most of the Servitors see the new natives as a fragile ecosystem of sentient life that must be nurtured, protected, and preserved and continue to aid them by providing knowledge, advice, and even mechanical devices to help improve the civilization of the Sunset lands.

The Servitors limit their direct interaction with the natives, preferring to allow them to find their own way, but offering their guidance from the Citadel of the Oracle. The voice of the Oracle, as the people of the Sunset lands call her, is that of a divymm named Pionesis, one of the leaders of the Servitors. She resides in an underground vault below the surface Citadel and communicates with the natives via technological devices. The Servitors prefer to keep their non-biological nature from the natives and none of the Kylornians on the surface have ever seen Pionesis' face. She provides general advice on a broad range of topics, except those of a military or warlike nature, and acts as neutral third party in negotiations between political entities. The Citadel is considered neutral ground, which none of the kingdoms



UNDERGROUND CITADEL OF THE ORACLE



would dare violate as they know that the Oracle would withdraw her wisdom from their lands. The Citadel also preserves knowledge, using esoteric technologies to transfer and store the memories, acquired learning, and wisdom of wizened elders whose lives are near their end into non-organic receptacles to pass on to new generations.

RECENT EVENTS

A team of shapeshifting Hegemony agents, composed of an alien race of ooze creatures known as the hetzuud, have been sent on a mission to Kylorn. They arrived through a different gate than the one the PCs arrived through and have traversed many hundreds of miles through the underground vaults and tunnels to the habitability zone. Their gate also only opens intermittently so this strike team is here for a long term mission with little support. Their goals are to obtain the genetic data that the Ancients planted on this world long ago and find a way to reactivate a more reliable gate as a prelude to assimilation and invasion.

This isn't the first Hegemony mission to Kylorn and the hetzuuds are well aware of the societal structure of the Sunset Kingdoms, the Servitors, and the Undying. While extracting the genetic information from the current native population would be trivial, previous missions have determined that the current population's genetics have mutated and no longer hold the code, only the pure genetic data of the original inhabitants from before the End of Time had this vital information.

The hetzuuds have managed to court an adversarial hardline faction of the Servitors, led by a soulbound shell named Hartaxian. This faction believes that reintroducing a native population to the planet was fundamentally a mistake. Hartaxian's faction argues that the Servitors should cut ties with the natives and watch them revert to barbarism and then most likely die out. When the hetzuuds made contact with Hartaxian, they offered him way to strike at the main line of Servitor support for the natives—the Citadel of the Oracle. All the hetzuuds wanted in return was some of the genetic data stored in the Citadel's archives.

A combination of subterfuge and brute force allowed Hartaxian and the hetzuuds to invade and take over the underground facility. Hartaxian timed his attack well; he was able to capture Pionesis the Oracle while she was alone completing routine maintenance. However, the hetzuuds diverged from Hartaxian's plan once they were inside the Citadel, breaking into the chamber holding the genetic seed information and stealing it. The hetzuuds then caused heavy damage to the Citadel in an attempt to destroy any other copies of the data. Hartaxian is currently busy trying to repair and regain control of all the malfunctioning systems.

When the PCs reach the Citadel, they discover the place in a state of confusion with Kylornians in all manner of dress milling about outside and robed workers attempting to maintain order. A combination of the PCs' strange

appearance and Kery's persuasive nature allow the PCs to quickly find out what is going on.

Several days ago the Oracle stopped speaking and no one has been able to determine why. After some negotiation, Kery is able to get the PCs in to see **Jonan Nessa** (NG venerable human), the head administrator of the aboveground Citadel. The sudden silence of the Oracle has deeply rattled Jonan who was born and raised near the Citadel and has known the voice of the Oracle for nearly all of his life. Unsure as to what course to take, he listens to the PCs' tale before asking for their help. Jonan has no idea why the Oracle has stopped speaking.

There was no unusual activity at the Citadel and nothing has changed recently in the political state of the nearby kingdoms. Jonan has racked his mind but the only thing he can think of is that a group of four envoys from the far north arrived shortly before the Oracle went silent. Thinking back, Jonan felt there was something off about them, but he couldn't quite put his finger on it (these envoys were the disguised hetzuuds). The fact that they disappeared at the same time and were not seen leaving the Citadel has heightened his misgivings about them. Jonan suspects that something has happened to the Oracle herself.

Unless the PCs have been purposefully insolent to Jonan, he has a good feeling about them, in spite of their strange looks and manner, and asks if they will help. Jonan offers to aid the PCs in any way he can if they can restore the Oracle's voice. Jonan is thankful when the PCs agree, and in gratitude he gifts them an *orb of venerable memory* (see pg. 81) which holds the memories of his grandmother Eliana.

Jonan guides the PCs through several private areas to a room deep in the heart of the building. A large part of the room is taken up with a 15 foot metal cube with steel doors on one side. Jonan explains that this is where gifts to the Oracle are delivered, and that the cube is a magically augmented lifting mechanism that transports these gifts deep below the Citadel. Normally the cube is sealed tight and can't be opened from the outside, but currently the doors are unlocked and the PCs can enter the elevator's interior. The PCs are likely to be familiar with the concept of this device from their time on the prison world in *To Worlds Unknown*. A single control mechanism closes the doors and the sends the elevators down several feet to the underground level of the Citadel.

UNDERGROUND FEATURES

The underground level of the citadel has the following features unless otherwise noted. The stone walls are concealed behind 2 inches of rustproofed gray steel (hardness 10, HP 60). All doors are made of the same material but are 3 inches thick (hardness 10, HP 90, Break DC 28) and are magnetically locked. These doors slide open to the sides and remain open for 1 minute before sliding closed again. A magnetically locked door can be opened with the correct magnetic key or a DC 30 Engineering check, this check takes a -4 penalty unless the user has several strong magnets to use as tools or another

PART 3: THE SUNSET KINGDOMS

magnetic key to work with. Dealing 5 or more Hit Points of electricity damage to a door “short circuits” the magnetic lock, causing the door to open and remain stuck in the open position. These magnetic doors can also be forced open with a DC 25 Strength check, but this triggers an alarm in the control center. Damaging a door (except for electricity damage), or failing an Engineering check to open a door by 5 or more also triggers the control center alarm. If the PCs trigger an alarm the constructs in the control center send the stone golem from area C3 to investigate. Corridors and rooms are 15 feet high and are well-lit by bright lighting set into the ceiling.

C1. ENTRY CHAMBER (CR 12)

The dull metal doors open into a chamber with walls of gray metal and lit by panels in the ceiling. To one side are stacked crates and small wooden barrels. There is a panel with intricate runes glowing on the wall next to the lift doors.

The barrels are filled with fine oil and the crates hold ingots of smelted iron. These are offerings from grateful patrons of the Oracle. In one of the crates of ingots is a bag of magnetized iron nuggets that may be useful in opening the doors on this level. The glowing panel is an audiovisual communication device Pionesis that can still use. If the PCs interact with it or stand in front of it for a minute, she notices them and speaks in a gentle melodious voice. While Pionesis can hear the PCs and see those within 30 feet of the panel, there is no visual sensor at her end so she can't show herself, only talk. She is cautious at first, hoping that the PCs are not in league with her enemies, but seeing she has little choice, she outlines the current situation. She asks for help and willingly agrees to any reasonable deal the PCs make, including searching the Citadel's records to find where Kylorn's primary gate is, in return for her freedom.

She explains that she only has limited access to the communication system, but she is very familiar with the layout of the underground citadel can give the PCs enough detailed directions for them to draw a rough map. She can explain how the magnetic doors work and suggests the PCs could potentially use magnets to open them. She warns them of the stone golem security system and about Hartaxian himself but she has no knowledge of the clockwork mages or the clockwork golem in the passageway of this chamber.

The eastern passageway ends after 20 feet in a wall of cogs and gears, which whirl to life as soon as anything moves within line of sight. This mechanical wall is actually a clockwork golem (see below).

Creature: This clockwork golem is currently in its wall of gears form and has been set here by Hartaxian to prevent anyone from the surface from moving past it.

Development: As soon as the PCs set off the alarm, the clockwork mages in the control center lock down the elevator to prevent any further intrusions from the surface.

CLOCKWORK GOLEM

CR 12

XP 19,200

N Large construct (magical)

Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +22

DEFENSE

HP 200

EAC 26 KAC 28

Fort +12; Ref +12; Will +9

DR 10/adamantine; Immune construct immunities, magic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee slam +26 (6d4+20 B plus grab)

Offensive Abilities grind, wall of gears

TACTICS

During Combat When a creature gets within 10 feet, the golem transforms back into its normal form and attacks. It ignores creatures further away unless they manage to damage it.

STATISTICS

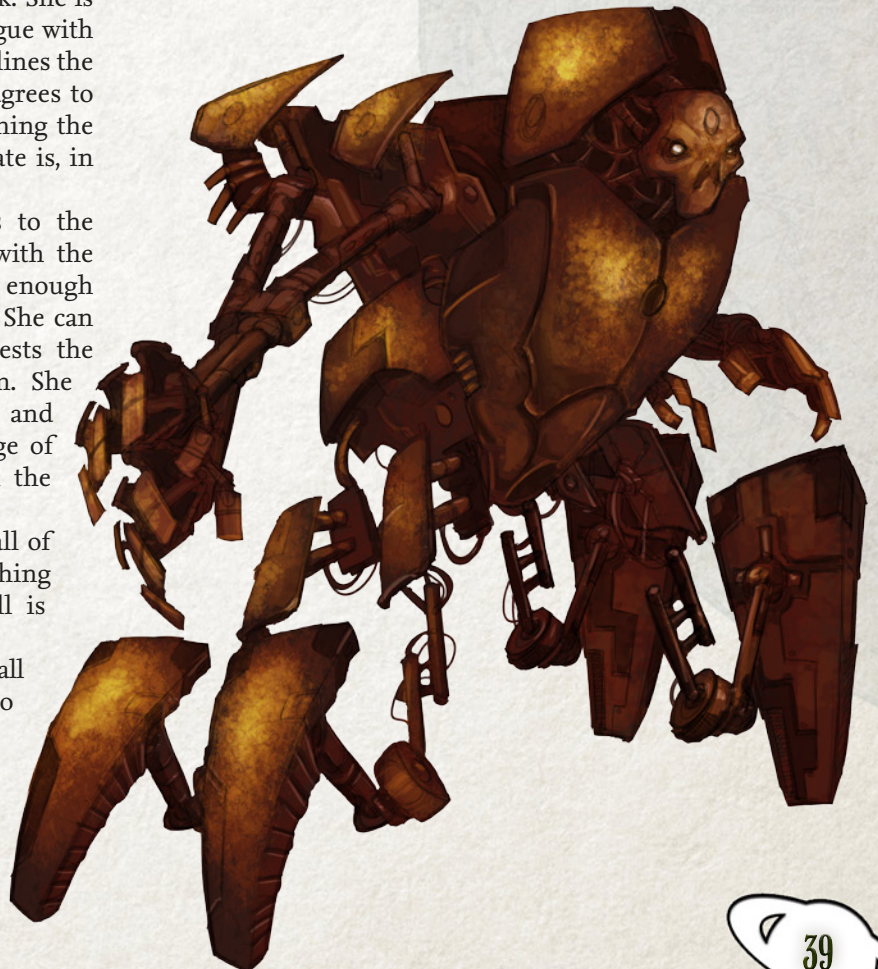
Str +8; Dex +5; Con —; Int —; Wis +4; Cha –5

Skills Athletics +27

Other Abilities death burst, mindless, unliving

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Death Burst (Ex) When a clockwork golem is reduced to 0 or fewer Hit Points, it explodes in a shower of razor-sharp gears and debris. All creatures within a 10-foot burst take 12d6 slashing damage—a DC 19 Reflex save results in half damage.



Grind (Ex) A clockwork golem deals an additional 2d10+12 slashing damage when it succeeds at a grapple combat maneuver as razor-sharp gears and blades emerge from its body to grind and slice its foe.

Immunity to Magic (Ex) A clockwork golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against a clockwork golem, as noted below.

A *grease* spell cast on the golem causes it to move quickly for 1d6 rounds, as if under the effects of *haste*.

An *entropic grasp* spell deals damage to a clockwork golem normally, and makes the golem staggered for 1d6 rounds (no save).

Wall of Gears (Su) As a standard action, a clockwork golem can fold into a whirling wall of grinding gears measuring 10 feet by 10 feet or 5 feet by 20 feet. Anyone passing through the wall takes 15d6 points of slashing damage. If the wall appears in a creature's space, that creature can attempt a DC 19 Reflex save to leap to one side and avoid the damage entirely. The clockwork golem can take no actions while in this form except to resume its normal form as a move action. A clockwork golem's EAC, KAC, and immunities remain the same while it is in this form.

C2. ARCHIVE CHAMBER (CR 11)

A half open door shows a scene of chaos. Rows of metal shelves holding glowing crystal facets connected by fine wires have been smashed or tipped over. To one side, fast moving apparatus whizz over large oval receptacles of ceramic and metal that stand in a shallow bath of green liquid. Dangerous electrical sparks ripple over the liquid's surface. At the other end of the chamber is a series of metallic surgical tables with long tentacles of metal thrashing from the walls and floor.

The roof of this room is 25 feet high with various gantries and supports crisscrossing the upper parts of the room. There are audiovisual sensors outside both doorways and Pionesis can communicate with the PCs through these. She can sense that the archivist mechanism is hostile and recommends that if the PCs have to go this way that they either sneak through by somehow fooling the pressure sensors in the floor and the archivist mechanism's visual sensors. If that isn't possible she advises the PCs to incapacitate the archivist mechanism before disabling any malfunctioning equipment. She asks that the PCs try not to deal too much collateral damage to the room itself, but admits that there are backups for most of what is stored in the archive and understands if the PCs have to smash their way through.

Trap: The archives have a variety of automated machines that normally assist with experiments, procedures, and help provide access to records. These are now dangerously malfunctioning or have been maliciously programmed to deal serious injuries to anyone in the room. These devices normally only respond to movement on the chamber's pressure sensitive floors, but the artificial archivist mechanism (see below) keeps triggering them.

Creature: The bulk of the work done in the archives was performed by the massive archivist mechanism, a low grade

sentient mechanism able to assist a user with a variety of tasks. A complex scientific machine, it was able to analyze or harvest genetic material, and it could even initiate the intricate process of recreating life from the Patron's genetic 'seed'. It has suffered serious impairment to its programming from both Hartaxian's attack on the central core and from damage to its systems caused by the hetzuuds. The archivist mechanism normally positions itself above well above the floor to provide support but remain out of the way, but it has wrenched itself free and now blocks much of the room. Currently it sees its primary goal as restocking the genetic material stored here by extracting it from any creature that enters. It waits until a creature enters the room before attacking. The archivist mechanism is too large to leave the room but it can use its impressive reach to grab creatures in the corridors and pull them into the room. Part of its faulty programming causes it to repeatedly retrigger the malfunctioning apparatus to 'assist' it in its task.

Development: If the PCs still have the android Dyosin from the Thanex warehouse, he can have his neural inhibitors removed here once the place is repaired and restored. Both these processes take a significant amount of time, so the PCs may have to leave the android here in Pionesis' care while they continue with their own mission.

MALFUNCTIONING APPARATUS CR 10

XP 9,600

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Engineering DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Duration** 2 rounds; **Reset** automatic
Effect Atk +20 melee (5d10 B & E); multiple targets (all creatures in the chamber other than the archivist mechanism)

ARCHIVIST MECHANISM CR 9

XP 6,400

N Gargantuan construct (magic, technological)

Init -2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +17

DEFENSE HP 145

EAC 22; **KAC** 24

Fort +11; **Ref** +8; **Will** +8

DR 10/adamantine; **Immunities** construct traits

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee slam +21 (2d10+18 B plus grab)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 25 ft.

Offensive Abilities fluid sampling

STATISTICS

Str +6; **Dex** -2; **Con** —; **Int** —; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +0

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fluid Sampling (Ex) Whenever the archivist mechanism successfully maintains a grapple, it drains samples of the grappled creature's bodily fluids with its syringed appendages, dealing 1d2 Constitution damage in addition to any action it takes as part of maintaining the grapple.

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C3. SECURITY STATION (CR 11)

This alcove is the sentry position for one of the complex's defensive guardians, a stone golem. The area is unadorned except for an intricate bronze cylinder that extends 2 feet out from the back of the alcove at a height of 8 feet. The bronzed cylinder connects to the back of the golem's head and allows for communication and delivery of orders to the golem from the panels in the control center (C6).

Creature: A stone golem with smooth limbs and a featureless visage stands here. It has orders to report any non-construct creatures it sees. This communication through the cylinder to the clockwork mages in the control center takes 3 rounds before they instruct the golem to destroy the intruders. If the PCs trigger an alert by tampering with a magnetic door then the clockwork mages in the control room activate this stone golem and send it to investigate that door, giving it orders to kill any intruders it finds.

Development: The golem carries a thin rod constructed from smaller metallic segments. This is a magnetic key that can open all doors on this level except for the doors to area C8.

STONE GOLEM

CR 11

XP 12,800

N Large construct (magic)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +20

Aura slow (10 ft., DC 18)

DEFENSE

HP 180

EAC 24; **KAC** 26

Fort +13; **Ref** +10; **Will** +10

DR 10/adamantine; **Immunities** construct immunities, magic

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee slam +23 (4d6+19 B)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

STATISTICS

Str +8; **Dex** +3; **Con** —; **Int** —; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +0

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Immunity to Magic (Ex) A stone golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance except *flesh to stone*, which removes its DR and immunity to magic for 1 round.

Slow Aura (Su) When a living creature begins its turn within 10 feet of a stone golem, that creature must succeed at a DC 18 Fortitude save or be slowed (as the *slow* spell) until the beginning of its next turn.

C4. UNDERGROUND ENTRANCE

The remains of several clockwork creatures lies scattered over the floor here. The metal walls show scorch marks and other signs of battle.

The remains here are those of three clockwork soldiers and a clockwork servant set to guard this entrance to the complex. They were killed by a combination of spells from Hartaxian and his clockwork mages, combined with bludgeoning damage from the clockwork golem.

Treasure: Among the debris lies an advanced pike which belonged to the leader of the clockwork soldiers.

C5. UNDERGROUND PASSAGE

A dull metal set of stairs descend for hundreds of feet before opening out into an underground vault and splitting off in several directions. These lead to underground areas controlled by the Servitors and are outside the scope of this adventure.

C6. CONTROL ROOM (CR 11)

A series of metal counters set with detailed buttons and levers divide this long room. Various screens on the walls show intricate runes, flickering lines, and strange diagrams.

This is the central control area for the underground complex. By manipulating the controls, a proficient user can open, lock, and monitor doors, activate and send orders to the stone golem guardian at C3, operate the elevator (C1), and communicate with a variety of devices on the surface to provide advice to the Kylornians there.

Creatures: These two automatons are part of Hartaxian's group. They are here monitoring and operating the mechanical panels and they attack as soon as they spot non-mechanical lifeforms. One of the clockwork mages spends a move action to activate the controls that summon the stone golem from area C3 to aid them. It arrives 3 rounds after being summoned.

Treasure: Each of the clockwork mage's crystal wands can be extracted from its torso casing. One is a *spell gem of arcane surge* and the other is *spell gem of explosive blast*.

Development: When Hartaxian hears the sound of combat from the core chamber (C7) he comes to investigate the following round.

CLOCKWORK MAGES (2)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

N Medium construct (hybrid)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low light vision; **Perception** +10

DEFENSE

HP 120 EACH

EAC 21; **KAC** 22

Fort +8; **Ref** +10; **Will** +12

DR 5/adamantine; **Immunities** construct immunities

Weaknesses vulnerable to electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee slam +18 (2d8+15 B)

Ranged aphelion laser pistol +13 (3d4 F; critical burn 1d4)

Offensive Abilities spell gem

STATISTICS

Str +5; **Dex** +8; **Con** —; **Int** —; **Wis** +3; **Cha** -4

Skills Acrobatics +17, Mysticism +17

Languages Common (cannot speak any language)

Other Abilities spell gem, winding

ECOLOGY

Environment any
Organization solitary

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Spell Gem (Ex) A clockwork mage casts spells from a spell gem. Its creator can equip a clockwork mage with different spell gems to allow it to fulfill different roles. They cast 0-level and 1st-level spells at will, 2nd-level spells 6 times per day, and 3rd-level spells 3 times per day. All spell gems are equipped with the following spells: 0 level—*detect magic*, *mending*; 1st—*overheat*, *magic missile*.

Offensive Gem 2nd—*caustic conversion*, *inject nanobots*, *recharge*; 3rd—*explosive blast*, *arcane surge*

Defensive Gem 2nd—*daze monster*, *security seal*, *mirror image*; 3rd —*healing junkbot*, *resistant armor* (lesser)

Utility Gem 2nd—*spider climb*, *invisibility*, *microbot assault*; 3rd—*dispel magic*, *discharge*

Both of these clockwork mages are fitted with offensive gems.

Winding (Ex) Clockwork creations, must be wound up before they animate. The creator of a clockwork crafts a unique key for each creation. This key is typically inserted into the clockwork's back and turned clockwise to wind it. Turning the key counterclockwise has the effect of winding the machine down, though only a willing (or completely helpless) machine will allow itself to be unwound in this way, meaning either its creator or someone its creator has specifically designated can normally do so. Since each key is totally unique, construction of a new key (or bypassing a key entirely) requires a successful Engineering check (DC = 20 + the clockwork's CR).

C7. CORE CHAMBER (CR 12)

The metallic walls of this circular chamber arch up around a central cylindrical core of elaborately plated steel. A solid door shaped panel on the eastern side of the core and illuminated panels on the walls show wavering lines and other symbols.

The panels monitor and control the flow of power to various parts of the complex. One of the panels is an audiovisual panel that Pionesis can see and communicate through. Not wanting to distract the PCs, Pionesis remains quiet if they are fighting Hartaxian unless she can point out something critical that will help the PCs gain an advantage. After they defeat Hartaxian, she warns the PCs how she is being physically controlled and to not open the door unless they are well prepared.

Creature: Currently Hartaxian here is trying to determine how to shut down power to the archives so he can regain control of that area. His long term plans are to remove anything of value from the archives, to shut down the power core, remove the valuable power crystal, and finally to collapse the elevator shaft with *disintegrate* spells to prevent other Servitors from reactivating the Citadel or communicating with the Kylornians on the surface.

Treasure: Hartaxian's soul gem is a flawless black opal worth 5,000 credits. Pionesis is uncomfortable with the

PCs taking this gem because she wants to see Hartaxian imprisoned for his crimes and placed where he can never harm others again. She gladly admits that the gem is the PCs' by right of battle, but offers to exchange it for 5,500 credits worth of gold, platinum, gems, or possibly even magic items. She can even be convinced with a successful opposed Diplomacy check to go as high as 6,000 credits. It takes her 24 hours to contact other members of Servitor society and for them to deliver whatever reward the PCs' decide on.

Development: Hartaxian has Pionesis' magnetic rod key in his possession which can open all doors in the complex, including the door to the central core.

HARTAXIAN

CR 12

XP 19,200

Male soulbound shell

N Medium construct (magical)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +21

DEFENSE

HP 170

EAC 25; KAC 26

Fort +9; **Ref** +9; **Will** +13

DR 10/adamantine and magic; **Immunities** fire, construct immunities; **SR** 23

Weaknesses susceptible to mind-affecting effects

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee battle powerglove +20 (2d8+12 B; counts as magic)

Ranged perihelion laser pistol +22 (4d4+12 F; critical burn 2d4; counts as magic)

Technomancer Spells Known (CL 12, melee +20, ranged +22)

4th (3/day)—*destruction protocol* (DC 23), *rewire flesh* (DC 23)

3rd (6/day)—*arcing surge* (DC 22), *arcane sight*, *dispel magic* (DC 22), *handy junkbot*

2nd (at will)—*make whole*, *recharge*

TACTICS

During Combat Hartaxian uses his attack spells to disable or kill his opponents, leading with *rewire flesh* on as many opponents as possible. If low on spells he resorts to his powerglove and laser pistol.

Morale Unwilling to surrender to inferior organic lifeforms this close to victory, Hartaxian fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str +0; **Dex** +3; **Con** —; **Int** +8; **Wis** +2; **Cha** +4

Feats Combat Casting, Master Crafter, Mystic Strike

Skills Acrobatics +27, Disguise +21, Engineering +21, Mysticism +27

Languages Aklo, Common, Draconic

Other Abilities soul focus, unliving

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Soul Focus (Su) The soul bound to the shell lives within a gem inside its chest. As long as this soul focus remains intact, it can be used to animate another shell, at the same cost as creating a new soulbound shell, and retains its personality and memories. A soul focus has hardness 8, 12 Hit Points, and a break DC of 20.

Susceptible to Mind-Affecting Effects (Ex) A soulbound shell is not immune to mind-affecting effects.



C8. CENTRAL CORE (CR 8)

This cramped metallic cylinder has glowing glass and metallic tubes extending from the roof to the floor. A large symmetric crystal hangs in a support structure from the ceiling. The crystal glows with extremely bright white light and has a variety of wires and glass tubes coming from it.

There is an audiovisual communication device here but the visual part has been smashed allowing only audio communication. Under Hartaxian's orders, one of the clockwork mages broke the device but lacked the intellect to realize it had not completely destroyed the panel.

Creature: This is where Pionesis the Oracle is imprisoned. Countless years ago as a scholastic young woman, Pionesis' soul once resided in a rapidly failing biological body, but Patron scientists transferred her consciousness and soul into a mechanical form. While Pionesis' personality has matured and her mechanical form has altered in a multitude of ways since then, she still sees herself as a teacher who finds fulfillment in guiding and mentoring others. As one of the eldest of the Servitors, she holds a position of respect and is considered one of their leaders. In spite of her longevity, Pionesis still sees the fresh joy in life and enjoys discovering new things. She

finds interacting with non-mechanical creatures gratifying as she still sees herself as being a vibrant person residing in a metal body and not a cold, unfeeling machine.

Hartaxian has attached a highly prohibited construct control device to Pionesis' neck and torso. This device has control over Pionesis' limbs but not over her mind or voice. The device currently has Pionesis programmed to attack any biological life forms she sees. Hartaxian isn't sure exactly how much control he actually has over her, so he doesn't risk releasing her to aid him when he is fighting the PCs. Pionesis warns the PCs of what Hartaxian has done before they open the door and begs them to smash the device or disable it. Pionesis doesn't know exactly what the domination device can do and she is unaware that it has an electrical defense mechanism. The domination device has hardness 15, 30 Hit Points, and a break DC of 30. The device can be sundered or it can be disabled with DC 30 Engineering checks, but a PC must make 4 successful checks as full-round actions that each provoke an attack of opportunity. Beating the DC by 5 or more counts as an additional successful check. Each time a PC damages the domination device or fails an Engineering check on it, the device emits an electrical surge of that deals

10d6 electricity damage to Pionesis and anyone else touching the device or Pionesis. The PCs can make a DC 15 Reflex save for half damage, but Pionesis takes full damage from this with no saving throw.

Development: Pionesis aids the PCs in checking that there are no more enemies in the underground complex and rewards them with a Servitor treasure hidden in a concealed compartment (DC 35 Perception to notice) in the central core. This is a *ghost killer microerrated longsword* forged from rare substance known as void crystal—a pale crystalline substance which has the same properties and weight as steel but drains negative energy from life forces powered by this type of energy. It functions as having the *disruptive* fusion despite not doing bludgeoning damage and that fusion does not count against its maximum fusions.

If Pionesis lived, she can also assist the PCs in building new equipment. With her aid, they can use the facilities here to craft items as though they had two additional ranks in the appropriate skill.

Story Award: After freeing or defeating Pionesis, the PCs should reach level 10.

PIONESIS THE ORACLE

CR 8

XP 4,800

Female divymm (pg. 74) mystic of Haymot Steel-Arm

LN Medium construct (magical, technological, sentient)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +16

DEFENSE HP 125 RP 10

EAC 20; KAC 22

Fort +7; **Ref** +7; **Will** +11;

+2 vs. mind-affecting effects, nausea, sickening, sleep, stunning

Defensive Abilities

hardness 2; **Immunities**

sentient construct immunities

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee enhanced slam +18 (3d4+8 B; critical knockdown)

Offensive Abilities healer's bond, healing channel (6d8), healing touch (40, 1/day), lifelink

Mystic Spells Known (CL 8th; melee +18, ranged +16)

3rd (3/day)—*remove affliction*, *tongues*

2nd (6/day)—*hold person* (DC 19), *lesser restoration*, *remove condition*, *zone of truth* (DC 19)

1st (at will)—*detect thoughts* (DC 18), *mind link*

TACTICS

During Combat The domination device forces Pionesis to attack, including taking attacks of opportunity, but the device cannot force her to use her spells or mystic abilities.

Morale While controlled by the domination device, Pionesis is forced to fight to the death. Once freed, she stops fighting immediately and heals anyone who is wounded with her healing channel and healing touch mystic abilities.

STATISTICS

Str +2; **Dex** +0; **Con** —; **Int** +4; **Wis** +6; **Cha** +2

Skills Culture +21, Engineering +16, Mysticism +21, Sense

Motive +16

Languages Ancient Patron, Celestial, Common, Draconic

Other Abilities offline reverie, repair, sentient construct, unity lifeforge

Augmentations inbuilt holy symbol, integrated armor plating

WISDOM OF THE ORACLE

Once rescued, Pionesis can access the Citadel's records and is quickly able to determine that the gate the PCs seek is

one of the few which is likely to have survived the End of Time. It is underground on the day side of Kylorn

and the only access tunnel that still connects to it leads from the from the Undying Empress's

Palace. Pionesis briefly explains some of the history of Kylorn, why both the Undying

and Servitor factions arose, and how there has been a 'cold war'

between the two for many years. She warns that Empress

Zefora is a powerful undead lich capable of rising again if her

material form is destroyed. If the PCs intend to face her then

they should find her phylactery, the source of her eternal power,

and destroy it.

Pionesis is also

able to call up a few images of the recent attack and show the PCs how

the 'humans' (actually the hetzuud) assisting Hartaxian were able to change

shape into the form of clockwork creatures to gain access to the complex. She is also able

to determine that these aliens were after some kind of genetic data from the original inhabitants

of the planet and that they stole this information on several crystal facet storage devices. She can't

determine what the invaders want with this data but she can tell that they ran several tests on it as if they

were looking for something specific.

In the long term, Hartaxian's use of the domination device is considered the gravest of criminal offenses by

Servitor society because it forces a sentient creature to act like a mere machine. Hartaxian's hardline faction never

recovers from the political ramifications of this outrage. Pionesis says that she will call on several other divymm to





help her restore the underground Citadel and recommences communication with the surface as soon as she can. Pionesis can operate the surface elevator from the control center and uses this to return the PCs to the surface once they are ready to leave.

PART FOUR: THE PALACE OF ETERNAL SUNSET

The sky slowly lightens as the PCs journey southwest from the Citadel of the Oracle toward the sunset and the Empress' Palace. The region they travel through is desolate and uninhabited by the Kylornian natives due to its barren and unproductive soil.

HUNTER ENSNARED (CR 10)

Several days into their journey the PCs hear the sounds of combat from over a low rise. As the PCs come into sight of the conflict they see a lavender-skinned Kylornian human with orange hair fighting a losing battle against four large hovering creatures that looks somewhat like flying manta rays with eyestalks which hold two of the creatures' four eyes. A dead narav lizard wearing a saddle lies nearby. The human staggers out of a pale cloud covered in sticky gunk that slows his movement. Meanwhile the flying creatures seem set to swoop down toward him.

Bram Roark is a Kylornian hunter who ventures out into the wilderness to hunt strange creatures that threaten the edges of civilization. He was hot on the trail of a disenchanter, one of the many dangerous creatures released on this world before the End of Time. Bram was hunting the disenchanter for its valuable hide and to keep the population of these menaces down. He stumbled into the nesting site of a pack of sporewings, who aggressively attacked him and his narav lizard mount in defense of their offspring and territory. Out of sight in a thicket of nearby bushes 40 feet away from the battle is a nest containing three young sporewings that are roughly the size of human children. Currently Bram is trying to retreat, but he is entangled by sticky spores and the sporewings are riled up and ready to continue attacking him.

Creatures: The sporewing is an ungainly-looking creature capable of releasing clouds of sticky spores. In spite of their short stubby finlike wings, sporewings are extremely agile in the air due to sacs of buoyant gases within their bodies which provide them with much of their lift. Sporewings have a dusty orange skin with lighter shading on their underbellies and a long tail that splits into either four or six bulbs which hold the creature's spores. Bram doesn't actually want to kill the sporewings as they have a majestic appearance and unlike the disenchanter, they aren't a threat to civilized lands. If the PCs intervene to help him Bram tries to convince them that they should all retreat away from the

creatures' nest. If the PCs seem powerful, he suggests that they should try to disable the sporewings without killing all of them. If the PCs don't interfere, Bram is set on and quickly knocked unconscious by the sporewings.

SPOREWING (4)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

N Large aberration (aquatic)

Init +2; Senses blindsense (vibration) 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.;

Perception +11

DEFENSE

HP 90 EACH

EAC 18; KAC 20

Fort +7; Ref +7; Will +6

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee slam +14 (1d6+10 B plus grab)

Offensive Abilities blood drain 1d2 Con, constrict 1d6+10, muddy cloud

TACTICS

Morale The sporewings attack until all intruders are at least 100 feet away from their nest. Otherwise they fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str +5; Dex +2; Con +3; Int -2; Wis +2; Cha -2

Feats Blind-Fight

Skills Athletics +11, Stealth +16 (+ 21 in water), Survival +11

Languages Aklo

Other Abilities amphibious, compression

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Sticky Sporecloud (Ex) Once per minute as a standard action a sporewing can release a blinding cloud of spores around itself in a 20-foot radius. The cloud obscures all vision, including darkvision, beyond 5 feet. Creatures 5 feet away have concealment, while those farther away have total concealment. These spores affect sight as a *fog cloud* and persist for 5 rounds before dispersing—a strong wind immediately disperses the cloud. Non-sporewing creatures beginning their turn in the spores must succeed a DC 13 Fortitude save or be staggered for one round by the soporific spores.

BRAM ROARK

CR 5

XP 1,600

HP 85 (currently 28)

As Kery Briona (pg. 36) without hurry or inspiring boost

ONWARD TOWARD THE SUN

If Bram survives, he heartily thanks the PCs and chats with them. He is curious about the PCs' unusual appearance but doesn't push if they seem hesitant to tell him. Bram explains how he came to his recent misfortune and cautions the PCs about the disenchanter he was chasing.

Bram has recently ventured into the area that the PCs need to travel through to reach the palace and he offers the PCs helpful advice about the lay of the land, granting them a +2 circumstance bonus on Survival checks for the next 20 miles of the PCs' journey. Bram also warns the PCs that he recently came across the tracks of a large serpentine beast known as a tyrnix. While the PCs are likely to be unfamiliar with this name, anyone who questions Bram about this beast and succeeds at a DC 18 Mysticism check realizes that Bram is "talking about a behir" except that Bram insists that these creatures can breathe concentrated acid rather than electricity.

If the PCs mention that they are traveling to the Palace of Eternal Sunset, Bram grows somber and says that he once had a friend named Rhyanna who ventured too close to the place and was never seen again. Bram says that the land around the palace is completely empty of animals and beasts of any kind for miles around. Bram once ventured to within sight of the place and in the distance he could just make out skeletal figures circling in the air above it. After talking with the PCs Bram readies his gear and prepares to make his way back to civilized lands, without his mount he knows that he'll never catch the elusive disenchanter. However if the PCs offer him a ride then he'll gladly accept in gratitude for his rescue, even if the PCs' path isn't exactly in the direction he needs to go. He only accompanies with the PCs until they get within sight of the palace, after that he wishes them good fortune and continues his travels.



ACIDIC REPTILES (CR 10)

A little over a day after encountering Bram and the sporewings the PCs enter the hunting grounds of a pair of Kylornian behirs.

Creatures: The hides of these Kylornian behirs are a brown in color instead the normal blue, and they spit acid rather than electricity. This mated pair is ravenously hungry and they are aggressively seeking out prey. These creatures tend to follow the low-lying terrain of this area, looking to come across their next meal at close range. If they spot the PCs first, they hunker down in a hollow well out of sight to either side of the PCs' path and wait for them to approach.

Development: If Bram is with the PCs he mentions that these creatures are likely to have a lair nearby and that it could contain valuables which the creatures have hoarded. The behir's lair is 3 miles away and requires two DC 13 Survival checks followed by a DC 23 Survival check to find, as the last mile is over rocky terrain and the behirs actively try to conceal traces of their passing near their lair. Bram offers to lead the PCs there and he can easily follow the behir's tracks. The lair is a shallow overhang that the behirs have dug out a burrow beneath. It contains a large amount of well chewed bones with coins scattered among them. These coins total 400 credits. There are the skeletal remains of several humanoids and broken equipment at the back of the burrow with the following nearby: a small metal tin containing a matched pair of dark onyx gems each worth 450 credits, a coppery *spell ampoule of mirror image*, a *dauntless jacket* (see page 80), and an electrostatic field mk 2 armor upgrade. If Bram is with the PCs he asks for a share of this treasure and is willing to negotiate on how much he receives depending on how much assistance he has been to the PCs. Bram would be happy with roughly half of a PC's share but will accept any offer that isn't clearly intended as an insult.

KYLORNIAN BEHIRS (2)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

N Huge magical beast

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +16

DEFENSE

HP 126

EAC 21; **KAC** 23

Fort +10; **Ref** +10; **Will** +7

Immunities acid

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +20 (2d8+14 P and grab)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Offensive Abilities breath weapon (15-ft. cone, 8d6 A, DC 16, usable every 1d4 rounds), swallow whole (2d8+14 A & B, EAC 14, KAC 16, 12 HP)

TACTICS

During Combat The behirs dash forward and both use their breath weapons on the leading PCs. They then try to use their reach to grapple PCs and swallow them whole at the

first opportunity. Their strategy is to bring down one of their prey, preferably a Large creature like a narav lizard, before the others can flee. If damaged, they both focus on attacking that creature until it is dead.

Morale The behirs aren't used to facing tough opposition and expect to win easily. Once one behir goes down, the other fights to the death to avenge its mate.

STATISTICS

Str +6; **Dex** +1; **Con** +4; **Int** -2; **Wis** +2; **Cha** +0

Skills Athletics +13

THE EMPRESS' PALACE

For the natives of this world, the partially ruined bastion known as the Palace of Eternal Sunset has perched atop a ridgeline on the edge of the scorching Daylands since time immemorial. Legendary magics bound into the structure allowed it to survive the ancient cataclysm that halted Kylorn's rotation. These potent spells also preserved the palace through the long ages which have passed since then, in spite of tectonic shifts that have rent the land over the ages causing the formation of the cliff ridge. Part of the palace's structure split off as the ridge formed, but still stands at an angle at the ridge's base, hundreds of feet below the ridgeline summit.

In ancient times the palace was once the principal seat of rulership for the entire planet. Empress Zefora, the elali monarch at that time was one of those who managed to survive the End of Time by retreating into a series of underground vaults.





Facing extinction as Kylorn became uninhabitable in the aftermath of the cataclysm, she and most of her followers chose to sustain themselves and preserve their civilization by enacting a series of necromantic rituals to become undead. Using potent dark magic, Zefora transformed herself into a lich, becoming the Undying Empress who still rules the palace today.

Today, the palace remains in a state of societal stasis. While there are many other undead in the tunnels and vaults below, only those who are exceedingly loyal or those the empress needs to actively keep an eye on are allowed to occupy positions in the palace. Besides the empress, there are three other members of ancient Kylornian royalty in residence. These are the princesses: Naychema, Rajshni, and Seshana. These are not Zefora's birth children, this part of the government of ancient Kylorn was meritocratic with princesses chosen based on their talents and formally adopted by the ruler. Each princess has her own reasons for wanting Empress Zefora destroyed but none of them trust the others. The empress is aware of their petty intrigues but she feels confident that she has all of them under her fleshless thumb.

APPROACHING THE PALACE (CR 11)

Unless the PCs are extraordinarily stealthy as they make their

way across the barren lowlands toward the palace, they fall under the notice of its undead guardians. Skeletal baykoks keep watch from the palace's rooftops and fly patrols over the land around the palace to keep any living being from disturbing their Empress. These patrols currently have orders to slay any living person who dares approach the palace. The baykoks patrol in pairs, the first pair that are likely to spot the PCs flies a high altitude patrol circling the palace in a half mile radius. As the first pair swoops down to engage the PCs this draws the attention of a second pair who are watching from the palace rooftop. Eager to eat the souls of intruders, this second pair wing their way toward the fight, arriving overhead shortly after the first battle starts.

BAYKOKS (4)

CR 9

XP 9,600

NE Medium undead

Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +17

DEFENSE

HP 145

EAC 22; KAC 24

Fort +11; Ref +11; Will +10

Immunities undead immunities

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (Su, good)

Melee claw +21 (2d10+13 S)
Ranged spectral bonebow +19 (3d6+9 P plus 1d6 negative energy plus immobilization)
Special Attacks devour soul, dread howl

STATISTICS

Str +4; **Dex** +6; **Con** –; **Int** +0; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +3
Skills Acrobatics +17, Intimidate +17, Stealth +22
Languages Common
Other Abilities unliving

TACTICS

During Combat Only 2 baykoks are present at the start of combat, with the other two baykoks arriving 1d3 rounds later. The baykoks move to hover 25 feet above the PCs and use their dread howls to strike fear into their foes. They remain at this distance to make use of their Point Blank Shot feat and to be close enough to swoop down and use their devour souls ability on fallen foes.

Morale Following their Empress's orders, the baykoks fight to the death.

ECOLOGY

Environment any
Organization solitary, gang (2–5), or flight (6–12)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Devour Soul (Su) As a standard action, a baykok can eat the soul of an adjacent dead or dying creature. Such a creature can resist this attack with a DC 16 Fortitude save. If the creature is already dead, it is not entitled to a save, though it cannot have been dead for more than an hour. Creatures affected by this ability can be brought back by a 5th-level (or higher) *mystic cure*. When the baykok uses this ability, it heals 5d6+10 points of damage and gains the benefit of a *haste* spell for 4 rounds. This is a death effect.

Dread Howl (Su) Once per day, a baykok can unleash an earsplitting scream. All living creatures within a 30-foot-radius burst become paralyzed with fear for 1 round unless they succeed at a DC 16 Will save. Creatures that make this save are instead shaken for 1 round. This is a fear effect.

Spectral Bonebow (Ex) The baykok fires spectral arrows that bypass normal armor, targeting a creature's EAC. In addition to dealing additional negative energy damage, the arrows paralyze their targets for 1d3 rounds on a successful hit (DC 16 Fortitude negates). If the baykok scores a critical hit, the duration of the paralysis effect is doubled.

PALACE FEATURES

The palace has the following features unless otherwise noted. Doors are made of magically treated stone (hardness 16, HP 120, Break DC 38) and are unlocked. The palace's walls, floors, and other surfaces are constructed from magically reinforced stone. Interior passageways are 15 feet high, and rooms are 25 feet high. The palace was once brightly illuminated by magical lighting, but now remains unlit, though exterior sunlight still provides illumination in some areas.

D1. FALLEN TOWER (CR 11)

This domed multi-story tower rests against the cliff side at a sharp angle. Somehow it survived coming down the cliff when it must have

broken away from the rest of the edifice that still stands at the top of the ridge. A switchback path of elevated platforms climbs from one side of the tower steeply up to the imposing structure atop the ridgeline.

Inside the fallen tower is a single open chamber with stairs leading up to a balcony and continuing on to a second story with a circular balcony. Each level has series of small windows that provide light and allow fresh air in. The interior is empty except for junk and rubble that has collected at the lowest point of each level. On the bottom level there is also a large pile of animal bones from Duonkhal's hunts.

Creature: This is the abode of the imperial huntsman, Duonkhal. In undeath, Duonkhal's enjoyment of nature and love of hunting warped into an intense hatred of animals and the need to slowly torture and dismember them. His undead state binds him to an area of several miles around the palace and he has exterminated every beast, large or small, within that area. Fortunately this enmity only extends to animals, he is unfailingly polite, although somewhat reserved, with people. He habitually holds to the same ceremonial customs he had when alive and his stoic loyalty to his Empress remains unwavering.

Unless he is out hunting, Duonkhal continually keeps watch from the entrance to the fallen tower. As the PCs approach he hides his unnatural features and moves outside to formally greet them. After greetings are exchanged, he states that Empress Zefora is currently holding court and that all three of the princesses are also currently in residence at the palace. If the PCs wish to make arrangements for an introduction or request an audience they should make arrangements with Gannath the chamberlain.

If questioned further, Duonkhal can be an important font of information about the palace and its inhabitants. He feigns ignorance if the PCs question him about attacks by the baykoks, stating that palace security is not his concern.

One thing Duonkhal firmly insists on is that all mounts or other animals, including animal familiars, are forbidden in the palace and must remain here. While this is strictly true, the fact that Duonkhal intends to slaughter these creatures after the PCs are gone allows the PCs to make Sense Motive checks opposed by Duonkhal's Bluff check to notice his hungry eagerness concerning this decree. Duonkhal is willing to allow advanced familiars that were originally not animals (such as elemental, fey, or outsider familiars) to enter but he expects the PCs, or the familiars themselves, to provide to a convincing case that they won't leave droppings everywhere or commit other improprieties.

If the PCs do leave any animals here, Duonkhal only waits until the PCs reach the ridge summit before moving the animals inside the tower to start his cruelty. PCs can make Perception checks to hear the sound of this, but remember to adjust the check DC for the distance and the tower walls that block much of the sound. Duonkhal attacks immediately if the PCs insist on refusing to leave their animals. However, if the PCs have no animals simply he directs them to make their way up the switch-backing flights of steps that ascend the steep cliff side.

THE PALACE OF ETERNAL SUNSET



DUONKHAL, IMPERIAL HUNTSMAN**CR 11****XP 12,800**

NE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +8; **Senses** blindsight (scent) 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.;**Perception** +20**DEFENSE****HP 180****EAC** 24; **KAC** 26**Fort** +13; **Ref** +13; **Will** +12**Defensive Abilities** incorporeal; **Immunities** undead immunities**Weaknesses** cold iron**OFFENSE****Speed** fly 30 ft. (Su, perfect)**Melee** incorporeal claw +23 (4d6+11 S; critical 1d8 bleed)**Offensive Abilities** blood drain (1d6 Con), possess animal**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 11th)3/day—*charm monster* (animals only, DC 17)At will—*holographic image* (3rd-level, as animal with backward feet, DC 17), *tongues* (animals only)**TACTICS**

During Combat Duonkhal focuses his attacks on any animals present unless one or more of the PCs pose a bigger threat. If wounded below 100 Hit Points Duonkhal flies down and uses his blood drain ability on a bleeding target and then focuses his attacks on that target in an attempt to kill that foe quickly.

Morale when reduced below 50 Hit Points Duonkhal considers retreating to warn Gannath of intruders. If the PCs seem don't seem to have strong ranged attacks, Duonkhal flees, otherwise he to the death rather than be shot down while trying to flee.

STATISTICS**Str** —; **Dex** +8; **Con** —; **Int** +3; **Wis** -1; **Cha** +5**Skills** Bluff +20, Sense Motive +20, Survival +20, Stealth +20**Languages** Common**Other Abilities** unliving**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

Blood Drain (Su) As a standard action, a bhuta can suck blood from an adjacent opponent that is taking bleed damage. The target takes 1d6 Constitution damage (Fort DC 18 for half). The bhuta regains 5 Hit Points when it drains blood.

Cold Iron Weakness (Su) A cold iron weapon is considered to be magical when used against a bhuta and deals half damage to it. A magic cold iron weapon always deals full damage when used against a bhuta.

Possess Animal (Su) A bhuta can attempt to possess an animal by projecting its soul into the animal's body. The target animal must be within 100 feet and the bhuta must know where the animal is, though it does not need line of sight or line of effect to the animal. If the animal succeeds at a DC 18 Will save, it resists this possession. If the bhuta is successful, its life force occupies the host body

for up to 10 hours. The host's soul is imprisoned with the bhuta, but can still use its own senses (though it can't assert any influence or use even purely mental abilities). The bhuta can communicate telepathically with its host as if it shared a common language. It keeps its Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma modifiers, base save bonuses, alignment, and mental abilities. The body retains its Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution modifiers, Hit Points, natural abilities, and automatic abilities. A body with extra limbs doesn't allow the bhuta to make more attacks than normal. It can't activate the body's extraordinary abilities.

As a standard action, the bhuta can shift freely back to its own body regardless of range, so long as it remains on the same plane. If the host's body is killed, the bhuta returns to its own body and the life force of the host departs (it is dead). If the bhuta's body is slain, when the 10-hour duration expires or the host's body is killed, it is slain.



D2. ANTEROOMS

Seating benches line the walls of this small chamber and a low stone table sits in a corner.

These small rooms were waiting and receiving areas for those wishing to see the palace noble who resided in the room nearby. The once-comfortable seating crumbled to dust long ago, leaving only hard stone for those who wish to wait for an audience.

D3. COLUMNED HALL

This long columned hall is brightly lit with sunlight but the air is hot and airless.

This hall is one of the few parts of the palace that receives direct sunlight from outside and as a result most undead avoid it. The constant sunlight makes the air here hot and stuffy. The palace was built before the planet's rotation stopped and wasn't designed with concept of light coming from a single direction in mind.

D4. TOWERS

The empress completely sealed these watch towers from the outside using her magic. They contain piles of dust that are all that remain of some of her subjects who long ago chose resistance rather than to obey their empress and live forever as undead. Zefora once had plans to use their bones as part of some necromantic ritual but she has dismissed them from her mind for millennia.

D5. SERVANT'S QUARTERS

These spartan cells are nearly empty save for stone pallets, but the skeletal inhabitants have no more need for sleep in their eternal toil. Skeletal servants stand motionless and inert, many carrying brooms and other domestic implements, as though frozen until the next call to service.

Creature: There are 36 human skeletons standing motionlessly here, some carrying brooms or other domestic tools. Created to clean and maintain the palace these undead remain immobile even if attacked and pose no threat to the PCs.

D6. KITCHENS

An ornate fireplace and rusting spits suggest this bare chamber of benches, countertops, alcoves, and empty shelves was once a bustling kitchen.

Bare stone benches and oven alcoves are all that it left to indicate this was once a food preparation area.

D7. STABLES (CR 9)

Large bare stalls line both sides of this long room.

Creatures: Zefora animated the bones of six ancient creatures in case she or any guest ever wishes to ride. These twin-horned rhinoceros-like creatures, known as

queensbeasts to the ancient Kylornians, were rare even in the days of Zefora's youth and only high ranking nobles were permitted to own them. They went extinct during the End of Time. Zefora has considered commissioning a large carriage for these skeletal beasts to pull but she sees little need for ceremonial journeys when her magic provides much quicker ways to travel.

ARSINOITHERIUM SKELETONS (6)**CR 4**

XP 1,200 each

NE Large undead

Init +1; Senses special senses alphabetized; Perception +10

DEFENSE**HP 50 EACH**

EAC 16; KAC 18

Fort +3; Ref +6; Will +3

DR 5/bludgeoning; Immunities cold, undead immunities

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee gore +12 (2d6+9 P)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.

TACTICS

Before Combat These skeletal beasts remain motionless in their stalls until a living creature enters, then all of them attack any living creature in the stables.

STATISTICS

Str +5; Dex +1; Con —; Int —; Wis +0; Cha +0

Gear decorative barding worth 100 credits, saddle and harness

D8. CHAPEL

This place gives the feeling of emptiness with a series of unfilled alcove niches surrounding a polished blank stone in the room's center.

The empress ordered all depictions of gods removed from the chapel shortly after her transformation into a lich. This place gives the feeling of emptiness with unfilled niches surrounding a polished blank stone that was once consecrated as an altar.

D9. GUARD ROOM

The floor of this gruesome chamber is littered with bones of every description, piled into grotesque nests in each corner of the room.

Treasure: The baykoks use this area as a gathering place on the rare occasions that they are not out patrolling the skies. Numerous human skeletons litter the floor here, travelers who got too close to the palace, as well as quivers of arrows taken as trophies from victims. Most of these are normal arrows but one decaying quiver holds five frag grenade I arrows and a single screamer grenade I arrow.

D10. ARMORY

Rows of empty weapon racks line the walls of this long room.

PART 4: PALACE OF ETERNAL SUNSET

Any weapons that might have survived the End of Time are either long gone or have disintegrated to dust through the ages.

D11. COURTYARD (CR 11)

Perpetual shadows cover this open courtyard even though the sky seems bright above. Exceedingly weathered statues worn down to little more than vaguely humanoid shapes line the edges of the gravel path through the area.

Haunt: Many of the dark necromantic rituals to transform Zefora's subjects into undead were performed here in this courtyard and the psychic remnants of these foul rituals lingers even after all this time. This haunt triggers when a living creature reaches the center of the courtyard. The shadows of the statues seem to come to life to attack the living.

DARK SACRIFICES

CR 11

12,800 XP

Notice Perception DC 20 (the sound of necromantic chanting and the flickering of shadows)

Trigger proximity; **Reset** 1 day

EFFECT

Shadows from the statues come to life and transform into rotting undead forms that hold down blindfolded victims in the center of a ceremonial circle and stab at them repeatedly with jagged disemboweling knives.

Each round every living creature in a 20-foot-radius from the center of the courtyard is attacked by a shadowy form that attempts to grapple them. This does not provoke an attack of opportunity. These forms have a +21 attack bonus. Grappled creatures cannot move without first breaking the grapple. The entire area is considered difficult terrain and is under the effects of magical darkness; the forms' attacks are unaffected by this darkness. Each living creature in the area also takes 3d6 points of force damage and 2 Constitution damage per round. Once a creature leaves the area, its wounds continue to bleed (as the bleeding condition) for 1d6 damage per round. The disturbances effects last for up to 1 minute or until all living creatures have left the area.

DESTRUCTION

Shining sunlight down on the statues at the center of the courtyard destroys this haunt.

D12. ENTRANCE HALL (CR 11)

Tall columns and a high arched ceiling give an imposing sense of space to this grand entrance hall. There are also several smaller passages aside from the impressive double doors at both ends of the hall.

Creature: Gannath was once one of Zefora's closest advisers and a powerful sorcerer but the occult ritual to transform him into an undead went horribly wrong and his body was cast through a rift into a planar void. However, after many years he returned in the monstrosously twisted form of a devourer. His loyalty to the empress is unquestioning and he spends his time here, exactly as he has been ordered. When the PCs arrive, Gannath hails them and asks who they are here to see.

Gannath is exceedingly hungry for souls and viciously attacks unless the PCs give the correct name of a palace resident and succeed at a Bluff check. If Gannath believes the PCs, he either directs them to the appropriate part of the palace or, in the event that the PCs asked to see Empress Zefora, he explains that the Undying Empress is currently not receiving any visitors and they must await her indulgence. He directs the PCs to the waiting room (D16), but explains that it will likely be a long time before the empress will deign to see visitors.

CHAMBERLAIN GANNATH

CR 11

XP 12,800

Male devourer

NE Large undead (extraplanar)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +25

DEFENSE

HP 170

EAC 24 KAC 25

Fort +10; **Ref** +10; **Will** +16

Defensive Abilities spell deflection; **Immunities** undead immunities; **SR** 22

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.; fly 20 ft. (Su, perfect)

Melee claw +21 (2d10+19 S plus energy drain)

Offensive Abilities damaging touch, devour soul, energy drain (1 level, DC 20)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 11th)

At will—*animate dead* (4th-level, DC 20), *bestow curse* (3rd-level, DC 19), *confusion* (4th-level, DC 20), *control undead* (6th-level, DC 22), *suggestion* (3rd-level, DC 19), *true seeing* (6th-level, DC 22).

TACTIC

Before Combat Gannath currently has 10 essence points.

During Combat Gannath starts by using a *confusion* spell, but because the empress only rarely grants him leave to replenish his trapped essences, he doesn't spend any more essence points unless he suspects there are invisible creatures present, in which case he uses *true seeing*.

Morale Gannath fights to the death to defend the empress.

STATISTICS

Str +8; **Dex** +2; **Con** —; **Int** +3; **Wis** +2; **Cha** +5

Skills Bluff +20, Intimidate +20, Mysticism +25, Sense Motive +20,

Feats Blind-Fight, Cleave

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Infernal, telepathy 100 ft.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Devour Soul (Su) By making an attack as a standard action against a target's EAC, a devourer can deal 8d20 points of damage. A DC 20 Fortitude save reduces this damage to 2d20. The soul of a creature slain by this attack becomes trapped within the devourer's chest. The creature cannot be brought back to life until the devourer's destruction (or a spell deflection—see below) releases its soul. A devourer can hold only one soul at a time. The trapped essence provides a devourer with 5 essence points for each Hit Die possessed by the soul. A devourer must expend essence points when it uses a spell-like ability equal to the spell's level (for sake of ease, spell levels for its spell-like abilities are included in its stats).

At the start of an encounter, a devourer generally has 3d4+3 essence points available. The trapped essence gains one permanent negative level for every 5 points of essence drained—these negative levels remain if the creature is brought back to life (but they do not stack with any negative levels imparted by being brought back to life). A soul that is completely consumed may only be restored to life by a miracle or wish.

Spell Deflection (Su) If any of the following spells are cast at the devourer and overcome its spell resistance, they instead affect a devoured soul: *confusion*, *detect thoughts*, *dominate person*, *fear*, *suggestion*, or any form of charm or compulsion. While none of these effects harms the soul, the caster makes a DC 20 caster level check when a spell is deflected—success indicates that the trapped soul is released from its prison and the creature whose body it belonged to can now be restored to life as normal.

D13. STUDY

Empty shelves line the walls of this room, with the crumbling remains of a moving ladder hanging askew from rails encircling the chamber. Tarnished chandeliers once bathed this room with light but hang now in cobweb-shrouded shadow.

Rows of empty shelves line the walls of this room. While the empress once kept a large and valuable collection of books here, she was only able to save a small fraction of them. The few that still exist are sealed a vault deep underground.

D14. LIBRARY

Shelves and niches line this room, of a size and arrangement for holding a vast library at one time, though now only dust remains.

This room contains only empty stone bookshelves. All the records that were stored here in ancient times were destroyed in the End of Time.

D15. DINING ROOM

This room has sculpted reliefs on the walls and holds a long stone table covered in a thin layer of dust.

The table is the only reminder that this area was once used for dining or entertaining, all other furnishings are long gone.

D16. TAPESTRY ROOM

This chamber is draped and piled with tapestries and banners of indifferent quality, clashing in their rustic simplicity with the elegant lines of the palace architecture. Every hanging is ragged and threadbare, covered in dust and gnawed by vermin.

settlements in an attempt to replace the magnificent tapestries that were lost from this room during the ancient war. However, upon seeing the basic work done by natives of the present day she lost completely interest in this project and the simple tapestries stored here have been left to molder and decay.

D17. WAITING ROOM

This antechamber has a spartan grandeur, as of a place once opulent and now long decayed and disused. The hard stone benches promise little comfort for supplicants awaiting an imperial audience.

Gannath directs the PCs to this chamber if they request an audience with the empress. Apart from hard stone benches there is little of interest in this room.



Years ago Zefora had her undead subjects raid nearby



HENDERSHOT

D18. DANCE HALL

This intimate hall has beautifully polished marble floors and an open alcove to one side.

This hall was once used for elegant dancing, with the side alcove reserved for musicians but it has remained unused since the End of Time.

D19. MUSIC ROOM (CR 10)

Two sets of shallow steps lead down past levels of seating to a circular stage area. The stage is bare of curtains or props, but still has a backdrop relief sculpture of an exotic city landscape.

The cityscape is a view of the ancient capital of Kylorn from before the End of Time.

Creature: The elegant court musician Nyshi perished in the cataclysm, but she died with a secret. Nyshi was part of a clandestine witches' coven and when she returned to unlife, her form burst into unholy flames transfiguring her into a witchfire. She haunts this part of the palace and the sound of her poignant singing can often be heard echoing through its darkened hallways. Nyshi still bears allegiance to the empress and tolerates the other undead in the palace but any living creature who dares enter her demesne suffers her fiery wrath.

Treasure: The following are stored in a compartment underneath the stage: three *spell gems of dimension door*, a platinum tuning fork (worth 500 credits; after practicing with the tuning fork for 1 hour, the user gains a +2 circumstance bonus on Profession (singer) checks for the next 24 hours), and a minor glulon crystal.

NYSHI

CR 10

XP 9,600

Female variant witchfire

CE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +19

DEFENSE

HP 140

EAC 22; KAC 23

Fort +9; Ref +9; Will +13

Defensive Abilities incorporeal, witchflame; Immunities fire, undead immunities

OFFENSE

Speed fly 50 ft. (Su, perfect)

Melee incorporeal touch +17 (2d8+10 F plus witchflame)

Ranged witchflame bolt +15 (2d8+10 F plus witchflame)

Spell-Like Abilities CL 9, ranged +17

3/day—invisibility, ray of exhaustion, wisp ally (DC 19)

6/day—disguise self, overheat (DC 20)

at will—ghost sound, dancing lights (DC 21)

TACTICS

Before Combat Nyshi invisibly hovers 15 feet above the stage softly singing a soulful wordless lament.

During Combat She focuses on destroying one target with her witchflame bolts. If foes move close or are effective with ranged attacks, she dramatically uses *pyrotechnics* to cover the stage with smoke and give herself concealment.

Morale Nyshi fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str —; **Dex** +3; **Con** —; **Int** +5; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +8

Skills Bluff +24, Profession (singer) +24, Stealth +19

Languages Auran, Common, Giant

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Witchflame (Su) Any creature damaged by the incorporeal touch or ranged bolt attacks of a witchfire must succeed at a DC 18 Will save or become engulfed in sickly green flames. While these eerie flames deal no additional damage, the affected creature becomes sickened and glows, taking a –20 penalty on Stealth checks. Affected creatures cannot benefit from concealment provided by darkness, *displacement*, *invisibility*, or similar effects. While under the effects of the witchflame, the victim gains vulnerability to fire and takes half again as much damage (+50%) from fire attacks of any sort. This effect persists for 10 minutes. The supernatural flames can only be extinguished before this duration expires by a *break enchantment* or *greater remove condition* spell—the effective caster level of the witchflame is equal to the witchfire's CR (CL 9th for most witchfires). Any creature entering the same square as a witchfire or striking it with a melee attack must succeed at a DC 22 Will save or begin burning with witchflame, even if the attack would not otherwise harm the witchfire because of its incorporeal nature. A bolt of witchflame has a range of 60 feet with no range increment.

D20. PRINCESS NAYCHEMA'S CHAMBERS (CR 11)

This curtained bedchamber contains only austere furnishings, most covered with dusty cloth. At the center of room is a low table holding an unlit ornate lamp with an azure cover.

The lamp was part of the focus of the summoning ritual to draw Princess Naychemata back to the material plane but it no longer has any magical powers.

Creature: Princess Naychemata's body was irrecoverably lost when she died. Naychemata's lover was one of those who disobeyed the empress's decree to become undead, murdering Naychemata and burning her body to ash before committing suicide. However, the empress used blasphemous rituals to summon Naychemata's spirit back to the material plane and bind it to west wing of the palace. Naychemata appears as a transparent maiden clothed in an elaborate sari, her form glowing softly with a strange blue light and fading into mist below her waist. While she portrays a sad and wistful manner, Naychemata dearly wishes to break her binding and be free

to journey outside the palace. This also means Naychemata would also be free to sate her innately vengeful nature and wreak destruction on the wider world.

Naychemata dreamily greets the PCs as they approach and enquires what they want. As long as the PCs provide some distraction from the tedium of her confinement she is willing to hear them out. Provided the PCs succeed at a DC 21 Diplomacy check, she explains that she is a captive here and how she is certain the magical bonds holding her are controlled and renewed by the empress. She believes that if the empress was destroyed then her binding would weaken and gradually fade over time. This is true—if Naychemata's binding isn't renewed, it will weaken enough for her to escape in one month.

While Naychemata she doesn't openly suggest killing the empress, she may subtly hint at it. She also suggests that her sisters may know more. During the conversation Naychemata focuses on one PC with a high Charisma, staring unnervingly at him or her. This PC reminds Naychemata of her lover who she would dearly love to hurt but who is long dead. If the PCs ask about the empress or her phylactery, Naychemata hints that she may know where this is. While incorporeally wandering through the palace's walls, Naychemata once observed Empress Zefora cast *dimension door* and Naychemata was able to determine where the empress teleported to, a spot deep under the palace that should be solid bedrock. She hasn't shared this information with her sisters, as she doubts they have the power to destroy Zefora. Even if they did, Naychemata suspects they would simply usurp control of the palace, take over maintaining her binding, and she would still be trapped.

Before Naychemata is willing to give up this secret, however, she expects the PCs to pay a price for it to prove their resolve. Naychemata asks the PC she is focused on to accept her 'gift'. Her gift is a *bestow curse* spell that she expects the PC to willingly accept (purposefully fail his or her saving throw). Naychemata chooses to disfigure that PC's beauty with a curse of a –6 penalty to his or her Charisma score. If the PC receives this curse then Naychemata accurately describes the direction and distance to area D25. She also tells the PCs that while destroying Zefora's phylactery might weaken her, the empress would also surely feel its destruction and become a lot more likely to flee from a dangerous confrontation. Naychemata can sense the destruction of the empress and her phylactery through her binding, and if the PCs return to Naychemata after destroying the empress, she attacks them out of fear she will be rebound.

PRINCESS NAYCHEMA

CR 12

XP 19,200

Female aoandon

CE Medium outsider (incorporeal, native)

Init +5; **Senses** true seeing 120 ft.; **Perception** +22

DEFENSE

HP 150

EAC 24; KAC 26

Fort +11; **Ref** +14; **Will** +14
Defensive Abilities incorporeal

OFFENSE

Speed fly 60 ft. (Ex, perfect)
Melee touch of madness +23 (9d6 plus confusion [DC 19])
Offensive Abilities touch of madness
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; melee +23, ranged +23)
 1/day—*confusion* (DC 19), *enervation* (DC 19)
 3/day—*bestow curse* (DC 18), *psychokinetic strangulation* (DC 18)
 At will—*fog cloud*, *inflict pain* (DC 17)
 Constant—*true seeing*

TACTICS

During Combat Naychemia aims to destroy the PC she is focused on, but uses area effect spells such as *confusion* and *fog cloud* if other PCs interfere.
Morale Naychemia retreats and hides using *fog cloud* and her incorporeity if reduced below 40 Hit Points.

STATISTICS

Str —; **Dex** +5; **Con** +0; **Int** +4; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +4
Skills Bluff +22, Culture +22, Mysticism +27
Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Touch of Madness (Su) The touch of an aoandon causes maddening fear. As a standard action, the aoandon can make an attack against EAC that deals 9d6 damage. Any living creature damaged by an aoandon's touch attack must succeed at a DC 24 Will save or be confused for 1d4 rounds. A creature that succeeds at this saving throw can't be confused again by this aoandon's touch of madness for 10 minutes. This is a mind-affecting fear effect.

D21. PRINCESS RAJSHNI'S CHAMBERS (CR 12)

Silk hangings cover much of the wall space of this opulent bedchamber. A canopy bed takes up the center of the room, with a couch, several chairs, and a dresser to one side. A dressing screen stands in one corner and a series of surgical tools are neatly laid out on a side table.

Creature: Over the ages she has existed, the bloodthirsty Princess Rajshni has become disillusioned with the empress's stance of ignoring the native population and leaving them to their own devices. Rajshni would much rather actively enslave the surrounding lands and rule an empire awash with blood. Having been completely unable to alter Zefora's mind on this, Rajshni now sees the only way forward is to succeed her "mother" by way of regicide.

If alerted to the PC's presence in her antechamber, she drinks one of her precious flasks of preserved blood and transforms into young, beautiful woman. If the PCs gain entry before she can transform, she demurely covers her features with her cloak to as she rushes behind a dressing screen. Once transformed, she greets the PCs in a seductive manner, her tightly-fitting off-the-shoulder sari artfully positioned to reveal just enough skin. Rajshni languidly

enquires as to what the PCs could possibly want with her. If the PCs can convince Rajshni that they are here to kill the empress and succeed at a DC 20 Diplomacy check, she becomes willing to help them.

Rajshni explains to the PCs that even if they defeat the empress, Zefora's magic will eventually bring her back unless the PCs can also destroy the source of her power. Rajshni is aware that her 'sisters' know more about this than they have revealed to her and she advises that the PCs go and talk with the other princesses. If the PCs seem determined to fight Zefora, and Rajshni believes they have the means to destroy her for good then Rajshni proposes an exchange. She offers a tattered scroll she claims will protect them from the worst of Zefora's magic in exchange for a large quantity of fresh vibrant blood. The blood of summoned creatures or animals will not do, and the blood must come from sentient intelligent creatures like the PCs. If the PCs agree, Rajshni guides the PCs to the blood-letting apparatus and passes them a needlelike syringe. Bloodletting deals 1 point of Constitution damage every 5 minutes and Rajshni requires 8 Constitution points worth of blood, although this can come from different PCs. In return she gives them the spell gem which holds an specialized version of *resistant armor*. This functions as the standard spell except it protects against all types of energy used by Zefora. Once the PCs have the gem and seem ready to confront Zefora Rajshni stealthily trails them through the palace. If the PCs manage to destroy Zefora, Rajshni attempts to kill them if they look extremely weakened from the fight, otherwise she acknowledges their victory and waits for them to leave the palace so she can take her "mother's" place.

Treasure: Rajshni keeps her special *spell gem of resistant armor* in a dresser drawer along with a tactical knife made from glass she's intended to use finishing off her mother's fext guards. Rajshni's bloodletting apparatus combines a set of surgeon's tools with a healing kit and various exsanguination implements, together they are worth 300 credits. Rajshni has 12 magical glass flasks that she uses to hold blood although currently only 4 flasks are filled with blood. These flasks are imbued with a spell that preserves whatever liquid is stored in them and together they are worth a total of 600 credits. Rajshni's jewelry box holds 750 credits of necklaces and bracelets, many set with bloodstones and red carnelians.

PRINCESS RAJSHNI

CR 12

XP 12,800

Female sayona

CE Medium undead

Init +5; **Senses** blindsight (life) 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft.;

Perception +27

DEFENSE

HP 200

EAC 26; KAC 28

Fort +11; **Ref** +14; **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities fast healing 5; **Immunities** undead immunities; **Resistances** cold 30



OFFENSE**Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** bite +25 (3d6+14 P plus bleed 1d6; critical bleed 2d6)**Multiattack** bite +23 (3d6+14 P plus bleed 1d6; critical bleed 2d6), 2 claws +23 (2d6+14 S plus bleed 1d6)**Offensive Abilities** absorb blood, staggering gaze (30 ft., DC 19)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 12th)1/day—*dimension door*, *dominate person* (DC 20), *fear* (4th level, DC 19)3/day—*fog cloud*, *invisibility***TACTICS****During Combat** Rajshni uses *dominate person* on a heavily armed warrior to gain a defender. If not using her living form ability, she uses her *fear* ability and her staggering gaze at the start of a battle. She divides her attacks to increase the amount of bleed damage she causes.**Morale** If reduced to less than 50 Hit Points, Rajshni uses *invisibility*, *fog cloud*, and *dimension door* as necessary to retreat.**STATISTICS****Str** +2; **Dex** +5; **Con** —; **Int** +0; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +4**Skills** Bluff +17, Culture +22, Disguise +22, Stealth +22**Feats** Spring Attack**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Infernal**Other Abilities** create spawn, living form**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Absorb Blood (Su)** As a swift action, the sayona may accelerate the bloodloss of each bleeding creature adjacent to it. Those creatures take 1 Constitution damage each as the sayona absorbs their blood through its skin.**Living Form (Su)** As a standard action, a sayona can transform into a young, beautiful person for 24 hours. It can only use this ability if it has absorbed or drained blood in the past hour. In this form, the sayona has the aura of a living creature instead of an undead (for the purpose of life blindsight and similar effects), its fast healing increases to 10, positive energy attacks (such as the Harm Undead feat) deal half damage to it, and it cannot use its staggering gaze. Exposure to holy water or positive energy attacks in this form reduces the duration of this transformation by 1d4 hours.**Staggering Gaze (Su)** Any living creature looking at the sayona in its natural form must make a DC 19 Fortitude save at the beginning of its turn or be staggered for 1 round.**D22. PRINCESS SESHANA'S CHAMBERS (CR 11)***Ornamental pillars line the edges of this richly decorated bedchamber. The place is sparingly furnished with several elaborately carved hardwood chairs and a lavish bed frame which lacks bedding.***Creature:** Princess Seshana does very occasionally wander the corridors of the palace but she spends almost all her time brooding here. Her untold years of undeath have driven Seshana to the nihilistic conviction that the only way to escape her tortured existence is oblivion. However, her own undead nature means she is bound to rise again if destroyed.

She once even ended her own existence by her own hand, but somehow the Empress had the power to drag her soul back from even that. Unbeknownst to Seshana, Empress Zefora used the dark power of the *necromantic box* to return Seshana's soul to its unliving shell of a body. Seshana now knows that the only way for her to experience the surcease of true death is her mother's destruction.

Seshana is aware that the empress's soul resides in a phylactery and unless this is destroyed, Zefora will inevitably return. By piecing several small things the Empress has said in the past, Seshana firmly believes that Zefora doesn't keep her phylactery on her person but that it is still close by in a place accessible only by magic.

When the PCs approach, Seshana covertly observes them from behind a pillar. She attempts to conceal the more obvious signs of her undead nature, such as her barbed hair, before coyly peeking around the pillar and whispering a courteous greeting. Seshana affects the demeanor of a shy but gracious aristocrat but this is simply a well-practiced façade, underneath this is melancholy and nameless ennui. Seshana asks why the PCs are here and what their intentions are. Seshana asks leading questions regarding Empress Zefora while answering the PCs with polite but equivocal replies. Using Sense Motive, Seshana tries to gain an idea of whether or not the PCs are enemies of the Empress. If they seem to be and the PCs succeed at a DC 26 Diplomacy check then she explains what she knows about Zefora's phylactery in the hopes the PCs will seek it out and destroy it. Seshana hints that her two 'sisters' may have secrets which they refuse to share with her but that the PCs may be able to coax out of them.

Seshana also offers the PCs a way to obtain the magical means to get to an inaccessible place in exchange for the promise of a future favor. If the PCs ask for details of the favor, Seshana says it is a simple task, well within their capacities, and should only take a minute or so of their time. If they hesitate, she offers the proviso that if the task is truly against their nature, they may refuse it. Seshana's task is for the PCs to give her eternal rest once the empress is truly gone.

If the PCs agree, Seshana tells of the court composer and maestro Nyshi and how she once possessed a collection of gems that let her magically move on and off the stage in the blink of an eye. Seshana gives the PCs directions to the music room but warns that Nyshi's spirit still lingers there.

PRINCESS SESHANA**CR 11****XP** 12,800

Female harionago

NE Medium undead

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +20**DEFENSE****HP** 180**EAC** 24; **KAC** 26**Fort** +13; **Ref** +13; **Will** +10**DR** 10/magic; **Immunities** undead immunities

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee claw +23 (2d8+16 S plus paralysis DC 18)

Multiattack hairbarbs +20 (2d8+16 P plus bleed 1d8), 2 claws +20 (2d8+16 S plus paralysis DC 18)

Offensive Abilities infectious laughter

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 11th, ranged +23)

1/day—*charm monster* (DC 14)

3/day—*flight* (2nd level), *ray of exhaustion* (DC 13)

TACTICS

During Combat Seshana uses *charm monster* to attempt to defuse a hostile situation. She starts combat with her infectious laughter and then lashes out at multiple targets to paralyze as many enemies as possible.

Morale Hopelessly aware that she will return from death, Seshana fights to the bitter end.

STATISTICS

Str +5; **Dex** +5; **Con** —; **Int** +3; **Wis** +3; **Cha** +8

Skills Bluff +25, Disguise +20, Intimidate +20, Profession (singer) +20

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Infectious Laughter (Su) As a full-round action, a harionago can emit a scornful laugh ringing out in a 60-foot burst. A creature that hears the laughter must succeed at a DC 18 Will saving thrown or be rendered unable to act and helpless to the harionago. Each round after the harionago acts, the victims may attempt attempt a new save to throw off the effects. A creature that successfully saves against a harionago's infectious laughter can't be affected by that same harionago's laughter for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting sonic effect.

Paralysis (Su) When a living creature is damaged by one of the harionago's claws, they must succeed at a DC 18 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds.

D23. IMPERIAL HALLWAY (CR 12)

This wide hallway is flanked by slim spiraling columns. Plinths on either side of the hall support marble busts of stern female humanoids.

The hall leads to the empress's chambers. While Zefora doesn't normally stand on ceremony even in her own palace, she does still employ an honor guard and stations them here to discourage any of her subjects from snooping in her personal chambers. The busts are of previous empress's of Kylorn, but Zefora's is not among them because these busts are only carved to commemorate that Empress's death.

Creatures: These undead guardians were chosen from the most loyal officers among the elite military forces of the Undying. While their duty is monotonous, these undead know that any lapse of discipline will result in banishment to the underground vaults below, or worse. They have orders to prevent any undead creature from entering the empress's chambers and to attack any living creature on sight as an intruder.

Development: If the PCs have not yet dealt with the empress or on the rare occasion that Zefora is in her chambers, she can easily hear the sound of fighting from her personal chambers or the audience chamber and becomes aware of the PCs' intrusion.

FEXTS (2)

CR 10

XP 9,600 each

LE Medium undead

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +24

DEFENSE

HP 165 EACH

EAC 23; **KAC** 25

Fort +9; **Ref** +12; **Will** +12

Defensive Abilities unkillable; **DR** 10/glass or obsidian;

Immunities undead immunities

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee microerrated longsword +22 (2d10+18 S; critical bleed 2d6)

Ranged combat rifle +19 (3d8+10 P) or

frag grenade IV +19 (explode [15 ft., 6d6 P, DC 17])

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th, melee +22)

3/day—*bestow curse* (DC 18)

STATISTICS

Str +8; **Dex** +5; **Con** —; **Int** +3; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +5

Skills Disguise +20, Engineering +20, Intimidate +20

Feats Cleave, Spring Attack

Languages Common, Infernal

Gear combat rifle with 36 rounds, microerrated longsword, frag grenades IV (4)



SPECIAL ABILITIES

Unkillable (Su) When reduced to 0 Hit Points by anything other than a glass weapon or an obsidian weapon, a fext is not destroyed, but instead becomes unconscious. Additionally, 1d4 minutes after falling unconscious, a fext gains fast healing 1. To be completely destroyed, a fext must be reduced to 0 Hit Points by a glass or obsidian weapon, or once it is rendered unconscious, its head must be severed with a piece of glass or obsidian. Once destroyed, a fext dissolves into fine ash.

D24. THE EMPRESS'S BEDCHAMBER

This sumptuous chamber has elegant carvings on the walls and ceiling but the furnishings are moldering and unused. A tattered book of arcane notes is damaged but, with a DC 25 Mysticism check can reveal what spells Zefora is most fond of (and has available). Hanging on one wall is a silver mirror worth 1,000 credits that she used in magical rituals long ago.

D25. GREAT AUDIENCE CHAMBER (CR 13)

Spiraling pillars of green marble line the sides of this vast chamber. The only light comes from a 30 foot diameter shaft in the center of this great hall.

The circular shaft in the middle of the room is 300 feet deep and lit by *continual flame* spells. At the 250 foot mark of the pit is a circular stone disk platform 5 foot thick that fills the pit's area which can levitate to raise or lower itself like an open elevator. Zefora has a magical rod that allows her to activate this disk and raise or lower it from any part of the pit. A PC can make a DC 25 Mysticism check while holding this rod to blindly activate it to move the disk. A PC can also make this check while in contact with the disk itself. When the disk is lowered right to the bottom of the pit, a passageway is revealed with steps leading further downward.

Creature: Empress Zefora was not always the wicked being she is now. At one time she was a benevolent and just sovereign of Kylorn, before the ancient evil of the Principalities and their many minions attacked her world. As the atrocities of the war mounted, Zefora became less emotional and more measured, but her determination to keep her world from the invaders never wavered. She found that she could do what was needed, make sacrifices and sacrifice others to fight back and hold on to Kylorn. After the End of Time, she did what she had to do to keep her people together, even when this involved less than honorable means. When the supplies started to run out it became obvious that holding onto her planet required extreme measures. After the other deeds she had performed during the war, making the decision to become undead seemed easier than she once would have thought. She gave the order for the remaining survivors to follow her example and eliminated any who dissented. The mechanical Servitors fled her necromantic pogrom and soon she was the uncontested ruler of her domain. So began the long reign of the Undying Empress.

The empress recently received visitors in the form of the hetzuud infiltration team. They presented her with an ancient message of felicitations and friendship from another elali sovereign named Makeyda. This message was in the form of a sealed metal box with a permanent *programmed illusion* cast on it which triggers when someone opens the box and broadcasts the message. Hegemony agents found this missive in the ruins of a world plundered long ago and the hetzuud's Hegemony handlers considered its use a calculated risk worth taking as a means of gaining entry to the tunnels leading to Kylorn's primary gate. The authentic message from a close friend caught Zefora off guard and brought back long suppressed memories from when she still lived and breathed. This combined with the hetzuud agents' complete ignorance of what the message contained and the simplicity of the orders they had been given, meant that Zefora noticed no duplicity in them and didn't question these humble messengers further, allowing them to pass through down into the underground passage leading to the gate. It was only after they left and she had played the message back multiple times that she began to ponder whether she had been too hasty in allowing them access. Considering herself to be affectively immortal, Zefora is willing to wait and see what occurs from these events, but this has made her extremely paranoid of any new visitors to her realm. She currently has given orders that she is not to be disturbed.

When the PCs enter, they find Zefora hovering at the center of the pit in the middle of the chamber. If the PCs try to negotiate with her, she demands proof from the Patrons themselves before she will let them pass and accuses them of lying, or of having their minds and memories altered even if they seem truthful. At best, Zefora demands that the PCs return to their own world using the gate they came through and bring someone of higher standing (such as an elali) that she can converse with directly. If the PCs are rude or refuse to leave after she abruptly dismisses them, she furiously attacks them.

Development: When the PCs destroy both Empress Zefora and her phylactery, they deal a serious blow to the Undying faction that inhabit the vaults and tunnels underneath Kylorn. This sparks an undead civil war as many contenders vie to become the new leader of the Undying. If the PCs do not fully deal with the lich empress, she makes for an excellent recurring villain who actively seeks the PCs' downfall.

Story Award: If the party conclusively defeats the empress, they should reach 11th level.

EMPRESS ZEFORA**CR 13****XP 19,200**

Female elali lich technomancer

LE Medium undead

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +23**DEFENSE****HP 190****EAC** 26; **KAC** 27**Fort** +12; **Ref** +12; **Will** +16

Defensive Abilities phylactery; DR 15/bludgeoning and magic;
Immunities cold, electricity, paralysis, undead immunities;
Resistances acid 5, fire 5; SR 24
Weaknesses phylactery dependency

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee touch +20 (6d4+13 C plus paralyzing touch [DC 21])

Ranged *glamered aurora arc pistol* +22 (3d6+13 E; critical arc 2d6)

Offensive Abilities legendary casting, legendary surge (3 points, 1d6), legendary touch, mental paralysis (DC 21), paralyzing touch (DC 21)

Elali Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th)

1/day—*modify memory* (DC 24), *invisibility*

3/day—*disguise self* (humanoid only), *suggestion* (DC 22),
supercharge weapon

At will—*flight* (2nd-level, self only)

Technomancer Spells Known (CL 13th; melee +20, ranged +22)

5th (3/day)—*heat leech* (DC 24), *teleport*

4th (6/day)—*animate dead*, *corrosive haze* (DC 23), *rewire flesh*
(DC 23), *wall of fire* (DC 23)

3rd (at will)—*arcane sight*, *arcane surge* (DC 22)

TACTICS

Before Combat When Empress Zefora becomes aware of potential visitors, she activates her *disguise self* (appearing as a less decayed version of herself), *flight*, and *supercharge weapon* spell-like abilities.

During Combat Zefora casts uses her *flight* and casts *wall of fire* to keep enemies at a distance. She relies on *heat leech*, *corrosive surge*, and *arcane surge* to deal with grouped enemies and her touch or *rewire flesh* to deal with those approaching her alone. She makes sure to reserve at least one 5th-level spell for *teleport* if her phylactery has been destroyed or stolen.

Morale Knowing that she can't be destroyed while her phylactery remains intact, Zefora fights to the death. If she senses the destruction of her phylactery or knows that the PCs have it, she attempts to *teleport* many miles away from the palace when reduced below 90 Hit Points.

STATISTICS

Str +0; **Dex** +6; **Con** —; **Int** +8; **Wis** +6; **Cha** +4

Skills Culture +23, Diplomacy +23, Mysticism +28, Sense Motive +23

Feats Agile Casting

Languages Aquan, Auran, Celestial, Elali, Ignan, Sylvan, Terran, Ultari; telepathy 100 ft.

Other Abilities cache capacitor 2 (*unseen servant*, *lesser resistant armor*)

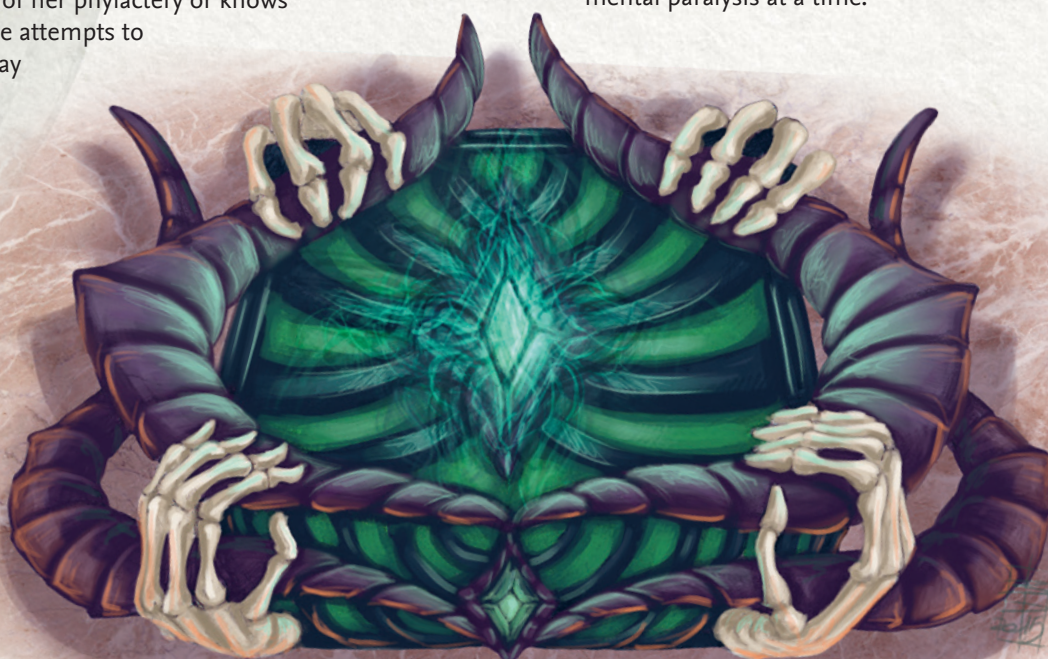
Gear ready-to-wear echelon fashion, *glamered aurora arc pistol* with 3 high capacity batteries, *ring of resistance mk3*, *ring of whispers*

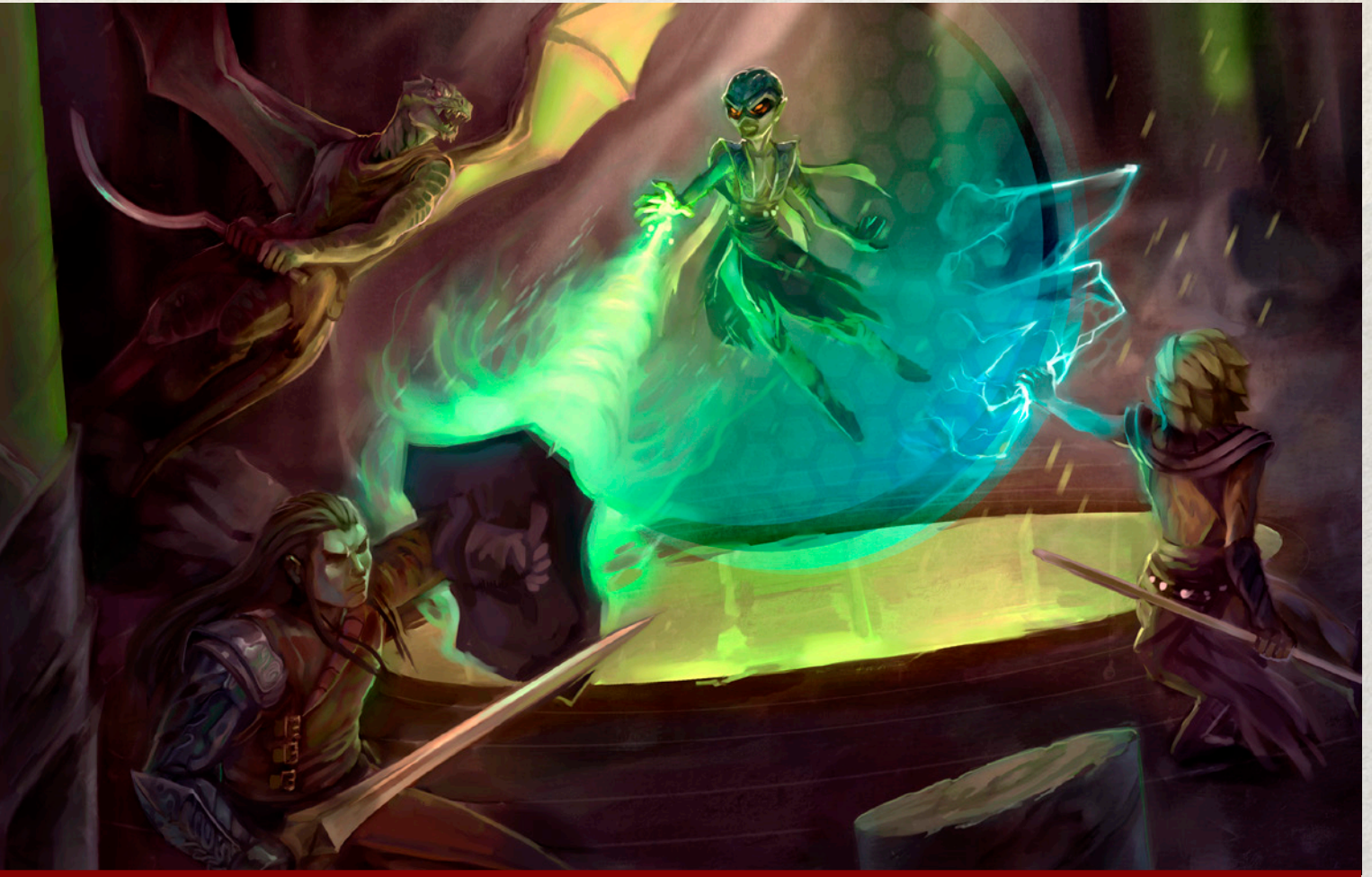
SPECIAL ABILITIES

Legendary Casting Empress Zefora can spend a legendary power point (see legendary surge) to cast one of her spells as a swift action without counting against her normal spells per day.

Legendary Surge Empress Zefora has a pool of 3 legendary power points. When she rolls a d20, she can spend a legendary power point as a reaction after the results are revealed to add 1d6 to the result of the roll. This can change the outcome of the roll.

Mental Paralysis (Su) Elali can assail the minds of lesser creatures with waves of psychic energy to temporarily restrict conscious control of their bodies. As a standard action, an elali can use this ability to target a single creature within 30 feet as a mind-affecting effect. As long as the creature has an Intelligence score but a modifier less than that of the elali itself, it must succeed at a DC 15 Will saving throw or gain the paralyzed condition for 1d4+1 rounds similar to a *hold person* spell. Each round, on its turn, an affected creature can attempt a new saving throw to end the effect as a full-round action which does not provoke attacks of opportunity. Once targeted by this ability (whether successful or not), a creature is immune to further mental paralysis from that elali for the next 24 hours. An elali may only maintain one instance of mental paralysis at a time.





Paralyzing Touch (Su) Any living creature a lich hits with its touch attack must succeed at a Fortitude save or be permanently paralyzed. *Remove affliction* or any spell that can remove a curse can free the victim (see the *bestow curse* spell description, with a DC equal to the lich's save DC). A creature with Legendary Power can spend a legendary power point as a full action to remove the effect from themselves. Anyone paralyzed by a lich seems dead, though a DC 20 Perception check or a DC 15 Medicine check reveals that the victim is still alive.

Phylactery When a lich is destroyed, its phylactery immediately begins to rebuild the undead spellcaster's body nearby. This process takes 1d10 days—if the body is destroyed before that time passes, the phylactery merely starts the process anew. After this time passes, the lich awakens fully healed (albeit without any gear it left behind on its old body), usually with a burning need for revenge against those who previously destroyed it.

Phylactery Dependency Zefora's magical power is more intrinsically tied to her phylactery than other liches. If any other creature has Zefora's phylactery in his or her possession, that creature gains a +4 bonus on saving throws against her spells and spell-like abilities and on caster level checks to overcome her spell resistance. If Zefora's

phylactery is destroyed she takes a permanent –4 penalty to her spell resistance and to the saving throw DCs of all her spells and spell-like abilities.

D26. ZEFORA'S ADYTUM

Empress Zefora used spells to hollow out this 10-foot-radius sphere out of the bedrock and it is inaccessible except by magic. The area has permanent magic cast over the area to prevent scrying. There is also a permanent *holographic image* (DC 20) covering the area, giving it the appearance of solid rock, to make it harder for anyone who is able to see or travel through rock to locate. Anyone teleporting here automatically attempts to disbelieve this illusion. Resting at the bottom of the sphere is the *necromantic box* (see pg. 81) which currently holds Zefora's phylactery. Zefora's phylactery is a small double sided circular mirror which always reflects her features in shadowy profile, from the right hand side on one side of the mirror and from the left on the other. Despite its delicate appearance, this phylactery has 40 Hit Points, hardness 20, and a break DC of 40.



PART FIVE: THE DRAGON'S GATE

The steps from the bottom of the shaft from the palace's audience chamber end after a hundred feet in a transport tube station similar to the one the PCs used on the night side of the planet, except there are two tunnels side by side and two platforms. As a more commonly used linkage between Kylorn's primary gate and the palace, this set of tunnels has two transport tube tunnels. This pair of tubes is programmed to return to opposite ends of the tunnel after being used, to minimize the waiting time for important travelers at either end of the tunnel. The tunnel extends a great distance into the harsh Daylands and it takes three days for the tube to travel to the other end. The journey is uneventful but the temperature slowly rises as the PCs travel, increasing to a warm but still pleasant 80° F.

The PCs arrive to a similar station to the one they left and find several passages up from there, but almost all of these have collapsed long ago.

E1. SHAPESHIFTER AMBUSH (CR 12)

Slim pillars support the roof of this high-ceilinged hall and thick piles of dust clog much of the floor. A passage enters from one end and at the other a recessed alcove around a dozen feet above the floor leads to a large portal of pale metal. Near the end of the hall sits a dusty bench panel covered with panes of darkened glass.

This was once a secure entranceway to the complex housing the planet's main gateway. The set of ceremonial carved wooden steps that once led up to the metal door has long since decayed into dust but the ancient portal is still solidly sealed closed. While smaller, the portal is recognizable as being similar in construction to the one in area **B4** and any PC who successfully picked that portal's lock gains a +2 circumstance bonus on Engineering checks to open this one.

The portal is made from the same magically treated alloy and warded with an *security seal* spell (CL 15th). It has hardness 25, Hit Points 720, Break DC 53 (48 if *security seal* is suppressed), Engineering DC 45 (40 if *security seal* is suppressed). The hall's walls are magically treated (CL 15th) and enhanced to resist spells (SR 21) and gain a saving throw against spells that could affect them (save bonus +10). An ancient enchantment starts at the portal and covers the next 100 feet of passage beyond it. This enchantment prevents extradimensional travel.

The hetzuuds lurking in this chamber have tried to conceal their movements but a DC 20 Survival check to track reveals recent disturbances in the piles of dust on the ground. The bench panel appears to be some kind of control panel and is set on an angle facing away from the portal to encourage those examining it to move to the western side, but in reality the bench is actually a creature, a hetzuud assassin named Kulsharn. PCs interacting with the bench can make DC 20 Engineering checks to notice that even though it seems to be inactive, something feels wrong about the panel's layout and construction.



Creatures: The hetzuud strike team that invaded the Oracle's domain has made it this far but have been unable to get past the secured portal. They have concealed themselves and are lurking here while considering their next move. The 'bench panel' is actually the hetzuud's leader while two other hetzuud agents have stretched themselves up around two of the pillars while up in the alcove the hetzuud sorcerer lies hidden flat out on the floor, out of sight of those below. A PC using *detect magic* on the room easily notices the auras from Kulsharn's magic items but the two hetzuud agents have magical wrappings that hide the auras of their magic items making them harder to detect. The team communicates silently with each other and ambushes the PCs then they examine the 'panel' or try to open the portal. Acting in unison, B'lephis transforms into a humanoid shape to distract the PCs while Kulsharn uses a death attack against a studied victim. Kulsharn and the two hetzuud agents revert to their natural forms combining to become a hetzuud amalgam.

Development: The hetzuuds no longer possess the genetic data crystal facets they stole from the Oracle's Citadel, these have already been passed onto other agents who are transporting them back to Hegemony-controlled worlds for analysis. If captured alive, the hetzuuds have little information of value. They have no knowledge of the Scions of the Celestial Helix or why the hegemony wants the

genetic data. One of the few useful facts they do possess is the location of the Hegemony-controlled gateway they came through to get to the world of Kylorn. However it would take magical interrogation to force them to reveal this.

Beyond the portal the passage continues for two hundred feet and the already warm air becomes hotter and hotter. The passageway opens into a series of crumbling chambers, all hopelessly collapsed. These are very hot conditions but the PC's Morphic Nature protects them from this heat. The main passage continues but there are deep cracks in the floor and walls.

Story Award: If the party hasn't already, they should reach 11th level after defeating the hetzuud.

KULSHARN

CR 9

XP 6,400

Hetzuud (pg. 76) operative

NE Medium ooze

Init +3; Senses blindsight (vibration) 60 ft.; Perception +19

DEFENSE HP 135

EAC 22; KAC 23

Fort +8; Ref +12; Will +8

Immunities ooze immunities

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., climb 10 ft.

Melee slam +19 (1d8+18 B)
Ranged elite semi-auto pistol +16 (3d6+9 P)
Offensive Abilities trick attack +4d8

TACTICS

During Combat Unlike the lesser agents, Kulsharn prefers to trick attack from range and pick off lightly armored opponents. However, if cornered into melee, he fights tenaciously.

Morale With nowhere to run, Kulsharn fights to the death

STATISTICS

Str +6; **Dex** +3; **Con** +4; **Int** +0; **Wis** +2; **Cha** +0
Skills Athletics +22, Bluff +19, Disguise +22, Sense Motive +22, Stealth +19
Languages Common, Hetzuud (tactile), Ultari
Other Abilities change shape (any [same size category]), compression, internal storage, mimic object, perfect copy
Gear d-suit III, elite semi-auto pistol with 30 rounds, *mk 3 serum of healing*

B'LELPHIS

CR 9

XP 6,400
 Hetzuud (pg. 76) mystic
 NE Medium ooze
Init +3; **Senses** blindsight (vibration) 60 ft.; **Perception** +17

DEFENSE HP 120

EAC 21; **KAC** 22
Fort +8; **Ref** +8; **Will** +12
Immunities ooze immunities

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., climb 10 ft.
Melee slam +15 (1d8+15 B)
Offensive Abilities healing touch (45, 1/day)
Mystic Spells Known (CL 9th; melee +15, ranged +15)
 3rd (3/day)—*haste*, *suggestion* (DC 20)
 2nd (6/day)—*hold person* (DC 19), *force blast* (DC 19), *mind thrust* (DC 19), *status*
 1st (at will)—*lesser remove condition*, *reflecting armor*

TACTICS

Before Combat B'lelphis casts *reflecting armor* and *status* whenever he suspects trouble.

During Combat The mystic casts *haste* at the beginning of combat, using *force blast* to clear away opponents if necessary, but he truly relishes casting *hold person* and taunting humanoids for their weakness. Once reduced below half Hit Points, he applies his healing touch to himself.

Morale B'lelphis believes in the hetzuud's superiority and will fight to the death rather than surrender to another life form.

STATISTICS

Str +3; **Dex** +3; **Con** +4; **Int** +0; **Wis** +6; **Cha** +0
Skills Athletics +17, Disguise +22, Mysticism +22
Languages Common, Hetzuud (tactile), Ultari
Other Abilities change shape (any [same size category]), compression, internal storage, mimic object, perfect copy
Gear d-suit III, *ring of sustenance*

HETZUUD AGENTS (2)

CR 7

XP 3,200 each
 Hetzuud (pg. 76) operative
 NE Medium ooze

Init +2; **Senses** blindsight (vibration) 60 ft.; **Perception** +14

DEFENSE

HP 100 EACH

EAC 19; **KAC** 20
Fort +6; **Ref** +10; **Will** +6
Immunities ooze immunities

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., climb 10 ft.
Melee slam +15 (1d8+12 B)
Ranged advanced semi-auto pistol +13 (2d6+8 P)
Offensive Abilities trick attack +3d8

TACTICS

During Combat The agents use trick attack whenever possible, preferring to fight at close range.

Morale Each agent will surrender if it is the last survivor. Otherwise, even if its counterparts are unconscious, they consider the risk of being turned in as a traitor too great.

STATISTICS

Str +5; **Dex** +2; **Con** +4; **Int** +0; **Wis** +2; **Cha** +0
Skills Athletics +14, Bluff +19, Disguise +19, Sense Motive +14, Stealth +19
Languages Common, Hetzuud (tactile), Ultari
Other Abilities change shape (any [same size category]), compression, internal storage, mimic object, perfect copy
Gear d-suit II, advanced semi-auto pistol with 30 rounds, *mk 2 serum of healing*, *spell ampoule of invisibility*

E2. VOLCANIC GROTTO (CR 11)

The large tunnel opens into an irregular natural cavern illuminated by a blood-red glare from a large jagged fissure in the northern floor. Stifling waves of heat waft up from the fissure. Thick veins of reddish ore and lines of glimmering minerals run across the walls.

The cavern was formed by lava and expanding gases during a volcanic eruption long ago and the area is rich with mineral formations and metal deposits. The cavern is an area of extreme heat (see Heat Dangers in *Starfinder Core Rulebook*). Armors' environmental protections can protect the PCs here, but their Morphic Nature feat does not. The floor is very uneven and littered with slag and ashy debris (+2 to the DCs of Acrobatics checks, DC 10 Acrobatics check to run or charge across the floor). Illumination comes from a side branch of magma from the nearby volcano. The fissure slopes steeply down for 60 feet before dropping into the magma.

Creatures: A trio of slag shards are here feasting on the plentiful iron deposits in the walls. Even though the area is quite chilly to the slag shards, they are very defensive of their food and attack any intruders on sight, focusing on PCs with large quantities of metal.

Treasure: The intense heat from the eruption that formed this chamber has led to the formation of many valuable crystalline geodes. The slag shards have smashed a few of these

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but have otherwise rejected them as they burrow in search of iron and other metals. A DC 15 Physical Science or Profession (miner) check identifies the potential for valuable geodes in the area. It still takes four characters around half an hour to gather, examine, and assess potential rocks. There is a total of 2,400 credits worth of amethyst, chalcedony, and sapphire geodes, including several with rare agate shells, to be found.

SHARD SLAG

CR 8

XP 4,800

N Huge ooze (fire)

Init -2; Senses blindsight 60 ft, blindsense (vibration) 60 ft.;

Perception +16

DEFENSE

HP 125

EAC 20 KAC 22

Fort +12; Ref +8; Will +5

Defensive Abilities molten form; **DR** 5/magic; **Immunities** acid, electricity, fire, ooze immunities

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold and water

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.

Melee slag blade +19 (1d6+14 F & S)

Multiattack 1d4+2 slag blades +13 (1d6+14 F & S)

Offensive Abilities excruciating burn, slag blades

STATISTICS

Str +6; Dex -2; Con +4; Int —; Wis -5; Cha -5

Skills Athletics +16

Other Abilities burrow, mindless

ECOLOGY

Environment any volcanoes or underground

Organization solitary

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Burrow (Ex) shard slag can burrow through solid stone at half its normal burrow speed.

Excruciating Burn (Ex) A living creature that takes fire damage from a shard slag must succeed at a DC 16 Fortitude save or be staggered for 1 round. This is a fire effect.

Molten Form (Ex) A shard slag's molten metal body is hot enough to melt stone. Creatures that begin their turn within 5 feet of a shard slag take 1d6 fire damage. Anyone striking a shard slag with a natural weapon or unarmed strike takes 2d6 fire damage. A creature that grapples a shard slag or is grappled by one takes 3d6 fire damage each round the grapple persists. A creature that strikes a shard slag with a weapon can attempt a DC 16 Reflex save; if it fails, it's unable to pull the weapon away from the shard slag's molten body quickly enough, and the weapon takes 2d6 fire damage. Unattended objects in contact with a shard slag take 2d6 fire damage per round. Damage caused to weapons and unattended objects is not halved and ignores the first 5 points of hardness.

Slag Blades (Ex) Each round, a shard slag manipulates its molten metal form to create 1d4+2 blade-like protrusions it can extend to attack prey. The slag blades each strike as slashing weapons that deal additional fire damage. Due to a

shard slag's constantly roiling molten body, the slag blades melt away at the end of the shard slag's turn each round to be immediately replaced by 1d4+2 new slag blades.

Vulnerable to Water (Ex) If a significant amount of water—such as the contents of a large bucket or a blow from a water elemental—strikes a shard slag, the creature must succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save or be staggered for 1d6 rounds. A shard slag that is immersed in water is automatically staggered and must succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save each round (this DC increases by 1 each subsequent round) or be petrified, reverting to its molten metal form once the water is gone.

E3. BREATHTAKING VIEW (CR 11)

Down below lies the raging core of an active volcano. The glow of molten rock fills the farthest reaches of the vast cavern with a ruddy orange incandescence. The scorching air is filled with flickering sparks of ash and the heavy smell of sulfur. In the jagged roof far overhead are myriad twisted formations of tortured rock while a dark basalt cliff ledge curves around the fiery gorge.

The temperature here is extreme; see the Environment section of the Core Rulebook for more details. The basalt ledge is rough and uneven (DC 10 Acrobatics checks to run or charge), but is solid underfoot and in no danger of collapsing.

Creature: A magma elemental guards the way here. The elemental beings of the volcano are respectful and subservient toward the vortex dragon Cilraska (see area D6) and this one watches over this entrance to her lair. It earth glides up through the rock to appear 30 feet in front of the PCs and bellows in Ignan for them to come no further. Unless the PCs retreat, or somehow mention Cilraska by name and say they are her invited guests, the elemental attacks.

Development: If able to retreat, the elemental earth glides to area E6 and warns Cilraska of intruders before retreating into the volcano's core to lick its wounds.

ELDER MAGMA ELEMENTAL

CR 11

XP 12,800

N Huge outsider (earth, elemental, extraplanar, fire)

Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +20

DEFENSE

HP 180

EAC 24; KAC 26

Fort +13; Ref +13; Will +12

DR 10/—; **Immunities** fire, elemental immunities

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., burrow 20 ft., earth glide

Melee slam +24 (4d6+19; critical burn 3d4)

Offensive Abilities lava puddle

STATISTICS

Str +8; Dex +3; Con +5; Int -1; Wis -; Cha -

Skills Athletics +25, Intimidate +20

Languages Ignan

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Plane of Fire)

Organization solitary, pair, or gang (3–8)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Earth Glide (Ex) An elder magma elemental can burrow through stone, dirt, lava, or any other kind of earth except metal like a fish swims through water. This leaves no trace or tunnel. The area feels warm for 1 round after its passing and often retains a smooth feel as if it had been polished.

Lava Puddle (Su) Once per day, a magma elemental can extrude a puddle of lava as a full-round action, filling its space to a depth of 3 inches. This counts as difficult terrain. A creature that moves through the lava takes 2d6 points of fire damage. The damage continues for 1d3 after the creature leaves the lava, though these additional rounds only deal 1d6 damage. After 2 minutes, the lava solidifies and is safe to touch. At the GM's discretion, while the lava is hot, it can start secondary fires.



E4. FIERY SWARMS (CR 11)

Creatures: When the PCs defeat or manage to bypass the magma elemental, a multitude of minute fire elementals swarm up from the volcano core and attempt to stop them from reaching the exit. These creatures are following the orders of the larger elemental to attack any outsider who would dare disturb the great dragon. The heat swarms appear as a swirling multitude of embers and tiny dancing flames.

HEAT SWARMS (3)

CR 7

XP 3,200 each

N Diminutive outsider (elemental, extraplanar, fire, swarm)

Init +4; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +14

Aura fiery aura (20 ft., DC 16, 2d6 F)

DEFENSE HP 105 EACH

EAC 19; KAC 21

Fort +9; Ref +9; Will +6

Defensive Abilities swarm defenses; **Immunities** fire, swarm immunities

Weaknesses cold

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (Ex, average)

Melee swarm attack (2d6 F)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

STATISTICS

Str -4; Dex +4; Con +2; Int -3; Wis +2; Cha +0

Skills Acrobatics +19, Mysticism +14, Stealth +14

Languages Ignan

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fiery Aura (Ex) Any creature within 20 feet of a heat swarm must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save each round or take 2d6 points of fire damage from the intense heat.

E5. JUNCTION

The raw natural stone of a jagged volcanic vent intersects with the smooth straight walls of a finely constructed passageway.

While the passage leading back toward the entrance portal is blocked with rubble for hundreds of feet, a massive construction project could clear the tunnel. This would allow future traffic to and from the gate to bypass most of the heat and dangers of the volcano. The air temperature here is merely 'very hot', which means that the PC's Morphic Nature feat protects them.

E6. DRAGON'S LAIR (CR 13)

The steel doors into this area aren't locked but are wedged shut, requiring a DC 16 Strength check to open. The noise of forcing the doors alerts Cilraska to the PCs' presence, if she isn't already aware of their intrusion.

This impressive high-ceilinged cavern rises steeply up at an angle toward a huge circular ring carved with ancient glyphs. The interstellar gateway is currently active revealing a scene of a star scape of nebula clouds. The chamber shows crumbled remnants of civilization but the place appears to have been torn and ripped asunder by geological forces long ago. Stalactites hang from the ceiling and loose rubble covers much of the slanting floor. A large pile of coins and other valuables rests upon a ledge at the top of the slope.

The air here is cooler, a more pleasant 85° F. The floor slopes

PART 5: THE DRAGON'S GATE

up steeply toward the gate at the top, requiring characters moving uphill to spend 2 squares of movement to enter each square. The DCs of Acrobatics checks increase by 2. The areas marked on the map are covered in loose scree and increase the DCs of Acrobatics checks increase by 5 instead of 2, and increase the DCs of Stealth checks by 2. The ceiling is roughly 60 feet high in most places and slopes up at similar angle to the floor.

This gate was actively open long ago when the End of Time struck and Kylorn's rotation was brought to a halt. This massive alteration caused the gate's focus to be wrenched from its normal destination and out into the depths of space. While the end in this chamber has a gate structure which projects the connection, the other end is merely a magical fissure hanging in the blackness of space.

Creatures: This is the terrestrial lair of Cilraska, a powerful dragon who uses the continually open gate to quickly move to and from the depths of outer space and return here where she stores her treasure hoard. Cilraska discovered the gate hanging in space on one of her many flights across the interstellar void and investigated. Seeing that the passages leading to this cavern were collapsed or blocked, she easily brought the fire creatures of the nearby volcano under her control and took possession of the place. Cilraska is young by draconic standards, but the legendary power she's gained interacting with the gate gives her the physical and mental maturity to desire a mate. She has found a suitable partner named Ghithorodax and recently Cilraska laid her first clutch of eggs. For the eggs to survive and develop properly, they must remain at the heart of a nebula where they can absorb and be nourished by cosmic energies. They could not survive in a planet's gravity well, so Cilraska's mate watches over them while she guards her lair and its treasure. These are Cilraska's first children and she is an intently expectant mother to be.

When the PCs arrive, Cilraska's initial attitude to the PCs is unfriendly; she is willing to listen to them but regards this entire area, including the gate itself, as her property. Cilraska brooks no interference with the gate, as she is well aware that if the gate were to close she would be trapped an extremely long way away from her offspring. She is not willing to let the PCs near 'her' gate under any circumstances. Eventually Cilraska tires of talking with the PCs and orders them to leave her domain. The PC's only alternative to complete their quest is to confront Cilraska and defeat her in combat.

Treasure: Cilraska stores her treasure in a haphazard pile. While she enjoys the security benefits of having an enclosed lair with only one entrance, she misses being able to display and admire her treasures three-dimensionally in the effects of zero gravity. These riches consist of: 6,000 credits in coins, bars, ingots, and nuggets. There is a flawless diamond worth 5,000 credits, a blood-red ruby worth 1,000 credits, and other semiprecious stones worth a total of 760 credits. A sooty meteorite covered with large patches of sickly green crystals is actually a large concentration of the precious skymetal noqual.

There is 8,000 credits worth of noqual in the meteorite but even extracted from the meteorite totals 80 bulk.

As well as mundane treasures, Cilraska's hoard also contains a convocation stone (see page 80), two *mk 2 ability crystals*, an advanced swoop hammer coated in silver, a *spell gem of reverse gravity* that leaves behind a smoky gem worth 100 credits even after the spell is expended, and a lesser graviton crystal.

Development: Cilraska isn't seeking to kill the PCs, but she is determined to defend her lair and its gateway from them. However, she would much rather retreat through the gate than be cut off from her offspring. Passage through the gate takes several seconds, so attempting to use ranged attacks through it at the fleeing dragon is practically impossible. Spells and magical effects do not pass through the gate. If the PCs try to pass through the gate, perhaps to chase Cilraska, they find themselves in the vastness of deep space, with no gravity and in a hard vacuum. Even with a way to breathe, the pressure effects of the vacuum are likely to quickly kill the PCs. Fortunately the PCs' Morphic Nature can save them. Any PCs passing through the gate gain an instinctive knowledge of how to move in space by throwing something in the opposite direction as well as a limited ability to move themselves slowly through space in zero gravity using mental power. Using one of these newfound abilities should allow a PC to escape from their predicament.

CILRASKA

CR 13

XP 25,600

Female dragon

LN Large dragon (fire)

Init +2; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., see in darkness; **Perception** +28

DEFENSE **HP** 225

EAC 27; **KAC** 29

Fort +15; **Ref** +15; **Will** +12

DR 10/magic; **Immunities** fire, paralysis, sleep

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., fly 200 ft. (Ex, good)

Melee bite +26 (3d12+21 F & P)

Multiattack bite +23 (3d12+21 F & P), 2 claws +23 (3d10+21 S)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with bite)

Offensive Abilities cosmic fire, breath weapon (40-ft. cone, 8d6 fire damage, Reflex DC 19 half, useable every 1d4 rounds), legendary flyby, legendary surge (5 points, 1d8)

TACTICS

During Combat Cilraska uses her breath weapon as often and effectively as possible, spending legendary power points to activate Coruscating Breath when she first breathes. Cilraska prefers to remain at range and make flyby attacks, but if any PC gets within 20 feet of the gate, she swoops down and engages in melee. She keeps herself between intruders and the gate at any cost, focusing her attacks and legendary power on anyone approaching the gate.



Morale Cilraska's clutch of eggs is far more important to her than her treasure hoard. If reduced to less than 75 Hit Points, or if the PCs seem to be on the brink of closing or realigning the gate, she flees through the gate. If unable to flee, she surrenders, offering her treasure in return for her life and the freedom to return to her unborn offspring.

STATISTICS

Str +8; **Dex** +2; **Con** +6; **Int** +4; **Wis** +2; **Cha** +4

Skills Acrobatics +23, Intimidate +23, Mysticism +23

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Ignan

Gear *dark blue rhomboid ioun stone* (imbedded in her hide), *ring of resistance mk 2*, *ring of sustenance*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Clinging Breath (Su) Cilraska can spend a legendary power point (see legendary surge) when using her breath weapon. If she does, any creature that takes damage from the breath also begins burning for 2d6 damage per round.

Cosmic Fire (Su) Cilraska's fires are infused with raw stellar power. Her fire damage is only reduced to half against creatures with fire immunity and ignore half of a creature's fire resistance.

Legendary Flyby (Ex) As a full action, Cilraska can fly up to her normal flight speed and make a single bite attack at any point during that movement. If she spends a legendary power point (see legendary surge), she can make all attacks of her multiattack during the move but must choose a different target for each.

Legendary Surge Cilraska has a pool of 5 legendary power points. When she rolls a d20, she can spend a legendary power point as a reaction after the results are revealed to add 1d8 to the result of the roll. This can change the outcome of the roll.

CONCLUSION

Once the PCs defeat Cilraska, they can attempt to realign the interplanetary gate. Shutting down the gate so it is no longer opens into the depths of space proves quite easy but attempting to realign it is an intricate operation that requires hours of work and the knowledge gained from the *Opus Aeterna*. At the end of this it becomes apparent that there are no longer any planetary destinations within range of this gate. The world that this gate once opened onto is no longer accessible due to a multitude of factors, the main one being Kylorn's stopped rotation. The PCs could potentially reopen the gate back to the space nebula, but even that would require significant work. However, as this is the planet's primary gate, the PCs can recalibrate it to compensate for the planet's lack of rotation so that secondary gates, such as the one the PCs came through, will become fully functional, rather than only being able to open sporadically. While the PCs work on this gate, they also gain access to diagrams showing partial mappings of the weave of gateways connecting Kylorn to other worlds. These will be of much value to the Bellianic

Accord who can make good use of them and they may also aid the PCs in finding their homeworld.

The PCs need to return to the gate on the night side of Kylorn and return to Argosa. If the PCs speak with Kery before leaving Kylorn, he is openly astonished by their deeds and promises to compose a ballad worthy of them. While Kery is keen to gain great renown throughout the Sunset Lands by singing tales of the PCs' exploits, the lure of the possibilities beyond his world calls to him and it wouldn't take much for him to make a journey through an interplanetary gateway.

The PCs may not have found exactly what they were looking for, but their actions have changed the fates of countless lives on the planet of Kylorn. When the PCs step through the gate back to Argosa they find a team of Thanex engineers and operators trying to determine the cause of its newfound activation who are extremely surprised by the PCs reappearance. Even if the PCs used violent means to access the warehouse gate, the Thanex coterie harbors little grudge against the PCs, as they stand to gain much from this newly reactivated gate. With the gate from Kylorn to Argosa now functional, trade and commerce can flow to this once isolated world. In the future, the Coterie of Argosa will hammer out trade agreements with people of the Sunset Lands, with the Servitors guiding these negotiations to ensure that Kylornian people are not taken advantage of.

If Empress Zefora survives, she is likely to actively extend control of the Undying over more of Kylorn and possibly begin extending her reach across the stars, now that the gate to Argosa's hub is working again. She could potentially join forces with the Hegemony in order to seek revenge on the PCs, or she could continue to maintain neutrality in the conflict between the Accord and the Hegemony, seeing both groups as upstarts, and preferring to consolidate power over Kylorn by eliminating the Servitors.

And lastly, the Hegemony has ears in many places and when they learn that the PCs are responsible for reactivating what was thought to be an extinct gate, the Hegemony's hierarchy becomes increasingly concerned.

But more adventures await the PCs on other worlds. Relstanna advises them of yet another possibility...a longshot...that involves a world that didn't just have its rotation stopped, but rather had itself utterly torn apart into thousands of drifting asteroids. One of these gates might still point towards the PCs' homeworld, if the PCs can properly map them and consult with the Patron ruins still contained within them. This adventure takes place in the next chapter of the Legendary Planet Adventure Path, *The Confederates of the Shattered Zone!*



HENDERSHOT

BEYOND THE ADVENTURE

- Five fantastic new monsters: the all-consuming **amalgamite swarm**, the enigmatic robotic **divymm** race, the sinister shapeshifting **hetzuud**, the sturdy and faithful **narav lizard**, and the lethal **toxic eradicator**!
- 8 new technological and magical items, including the *energy blade*, *convocation stone*, *dauntless jacket*, and the malevolent *necromantic box*!
- A detailed gazetteer of the broken world of Kylorn, tidally locked with one side blasted by eternal sunshine and the other frozen in endless night, plus the massive tunnel system riddling the under-realms of the planet where undying machines and immortal undead wage an unending shadow war.
- A detailed look at archetypes and feats blending magic and machinery as they pry into the secrets of the stars and the deep places of worlds they explore, like the **delver wizard** and **engram channeler** to the **nanotech infuser** and **robot fighter**!
- “Machine Language,” the latest chapter in Chris A. Jackson’s ongoing tale of Anasya, an interplanetary adventurer caught up in an endless war between deathless enemies as she must talk her way through deadly danger from a mechanical menace.

BESTIARY

AMALGAMITE SWARM

A scuttling mass of metallic bugs surges forward. These insect-like automatons have sharp pincers and are formed from minute shards and splinters of metal.

AMALGAMITE SWARM

CR 8

XP 400

N Tiny construct (swarm, technological)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +16

DEFENSE

HP 125

EAC 20; **KAC** 22**Fort** +8; **Ref** +8; **Will** +5**Defenses** swarm defenses; **Defensive Abilities** fast healing 10, hardness 10; **Immunities** construct immunities

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.**Melee** swarm attack (3d4+4 P)**Ranged** acid spit +17 (1d6+8 A)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.**Offensive Abilities** distraction (DC 16), scuttling swarm**Other Abilities** unliving

STATISTICS

Str -4; **Dex** +6; **Con** —; **Int** +0; **Wis** +2; **Cha** -2**Feats** Step Up**Skills** Climb +16, Engineering +16, Stealth +21**Languages** Common (can't speak any language)

ECOLOGY

Environment any land or underground**Organization** solitary, pair, or assimilation (3-6)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Acid Spit (Ex) Each round as a swift action, an amalgamite swarm can emit a stream of acid at one target with a range increment of 10 feet. Amalgamite swarms are immune to this acid.

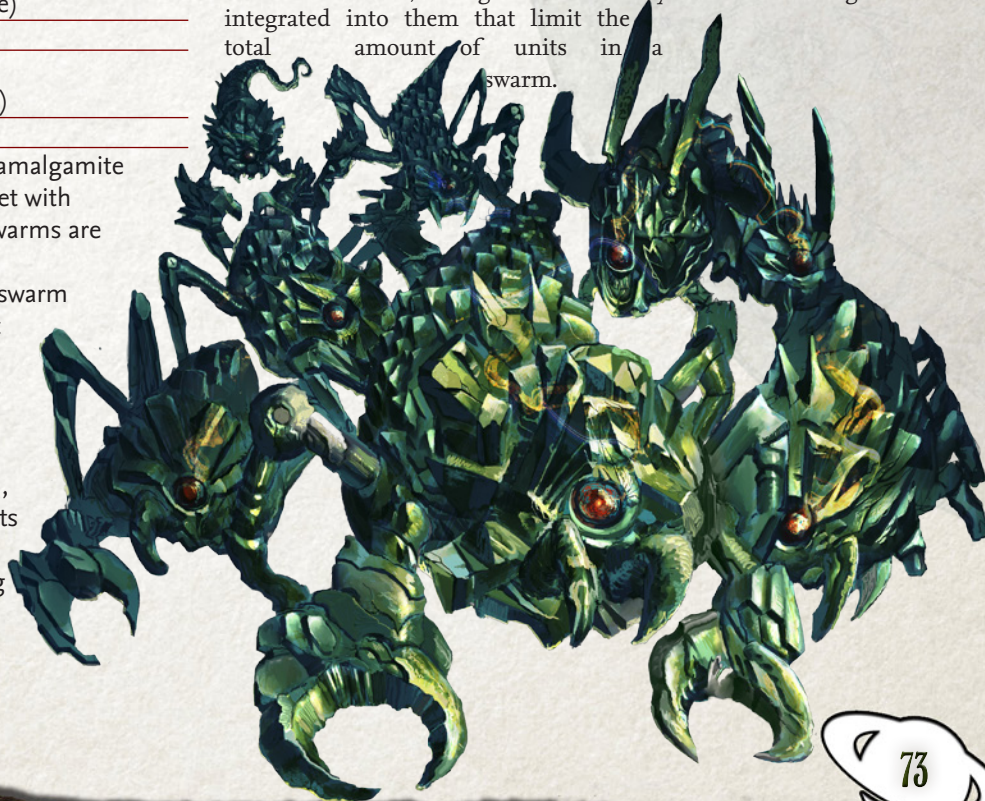
Dispersion (Ex) As a full action, an amalgamite swarm can disperse, spreading itself across a 30-foot cube. While dispersed, it deals no damage and can't use its other special abilities until it reforms. A dispersed amalgamite swarm can make Stealth checks even without cover or concealment or when being directly observed, and when dispersed it gains a +10 bonus on its Stealth checks and does not take increased damage from area effects as normal for being a swarm. Reforming into its normal swarm form takes 1 minute, and while reforming its

bonus on Stealth checks is reduced to +5.

Scuttling Swarm (Ex) An amalgamite swarm can use its Step Up feat to move and reshape itself when a creature takes a 5-foot step while within the swarm's area. Each part of the swarm can move 5 feet, provided each part of the swarm ends this movement in a square occupied by the creature taking the 5-foot step or in a square that the swarm occupied before taking this movement. Movement taken by the swarm when using this feat does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Originally forged as a self-replicating tool by a now-extinct race of artificers, these tiny animated machines were subverted by the Hegemony, used to destroy their creators, and then utilized by the Ultari as a weapon of conquest. By itself, each individual amalgamite component has sentience but little more. However, when they bring themselves together to form into insect-like amalgamite units, a hive-like consciousness forms. Amalgamites are inextricably bound to follow their programmed commands but they have the capacity to learn and are often quite cunning in how they follow out their orders.

Amalgamites use their acidic spittle to break down small quantities of common minerals for energy to sustain themselves. They can also rapidly self repair damaged or broken components, but this requires considerably more energy. The process of creating amalgamites is complex and a closely guarded secret, but amalgamites can replicate by themselves. This requires quantities of refined metal imbued with significant amounts of magical energy. Due to the potential danger of amalgamites reproducing out of control and destroying their owner's valuables, amalgamites routinely have strict safeguards integrated into them that limit the total amount of units in a swarm.



DIVYMM

Elegantly form-fitting plating encases this metallic person. A small panel inset into this individual's chest shines with energy and a circular rune on this being's forehead glows the same color.

DIVYMM CR 1

XP 400

N Medium construct (magical, technological, sentient)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low light vision; **Perception** +5

DEFENSE HP 17

EAC 11; **KAC** 12

Fort +3; **Ref** +1; **Will** +2; +2 vs. mind-affecting effects, nausea, sickening, sleep, stunning

Defensive Abilities hardness 2; **Immunities** sentient construct immunities

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee slam +7 (1d4+5 B)

Ranged pulsecaster pistol +5 (1d4+1 E nonlethal)

STATISTICS

Str +4; **Dex** +1; **Con** —; **Int** +2; **Wis** +0; **Cha** —1

Skills Computers +10, Diplomacy +5, Engineering +10, Physical Science +10, Piloting +5

Languages Ancient Patron, Common

Other Abilities offline reverie, repair, sentient construct, unity lifeforge

Equipment pulsecaster pistol with 2 batteries (20 charges each)

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, or gestalt (3-8)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Offline Reverie (Ex) As a full action, a divymm can enter a state of suspended animation, freezing in place and becoming motionless. While in offline reverie, spells or abilities that detect life indicate that the divymm is neither alive nor dead and abilities which detect or read thoughts don't reveal any thoughts from the divymm. However, the divymm responds to changes in external conditions or bodily harm as if asleep. A divymm can remain in offline reverie indefinitely and can exit this state after a predetermined time or as a full action in response to external conditions.

Repair (Ex) Repairs can fix a damaged divymm. A successful DC 20 Engineering check and 30 minutes of work restores 10% of a divymm's maximum Hit Points. Failing this check by 10 or more deals 1d4 damage to the divymm but this damage can't reduce the divymm to fewer than 1 HP. One bulk worth of divymm repair raw materials costs 10 UPBs and each successful Engineering check uses up 1 bulk of raw materials.

Sentient Construct (Ex) A divymm is a mind and living soul in a constructed body. This ability replaces the standard features of the construct type. A divymm counts as a living creature as well as a construct for the purpose of spells and other effects. Divymms are immune to fatigue, exhaustion, nonlethal damage, bleed effects, disease, paralysis, and poison unless

those effects specifically effect constructs. A divymm is not subject to ability damage or ability drain to physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution), but is subject to ability damage or ability drain to mental ability scores (Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma). Divymms gain a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against mind-affecting effects, sleep effects, stunning, and any effect that causes the sickened or nauseated condition unless those effects specifically target constructs. Any numerical bonuses, penalties, or other modifiers from morale, fear, and emotion-based effects are halved for a divymm.

Divymms do not naturally recover Hit Points but do naturally heal ability damage as normal. Spells and supernatural abilities that restore Hit Point or ability damage to living creatures restore only half the normal number of Hit Points to a divymm. Spells and abilities that heal constructs (such as *make whole*) function normally. A 4th-level or higher *mystic cure* can restore a divymm to life as if he or she were a living creature.

Divymms do not need to breathe or eat, but do need to sleep (or use offline reverie) for 2 hours per day.

Unity Lifeforge (Ex) Divymms can instantly recognize each other on sight. All divymms instinctively know that they serve a common purpose and while they may have differences of opinion, one divymm cannot knowingly attack or harm another.

RACIAL TRAITS

Ability Adjustments: +2 Str, +2 Int, —2 Cha

Hit Points: 6

Size and Type: Divymm are Medium constructs with the sentient subtype.

Exceptional Vision: Divymm have darkvision out to 60 feet and low-light vision.

Physical Structure: Divymm are constructed from durable materials and gain hardness 2.

Slam: Divymms are always considered armed. They can deal 1d4 lethal damage with a slam attack and this attack doesn't count as archaic.

Machine Empathy: Divymm receive a +2 racial bonus on Engineering checks.

Offline Reverie: As described above

Sentient Construct: As described above

Repair: As described above

Unity Lifeforge: As described above

APPENDIX: BESTIARY

The divymm are an enigma: a race of intelligent constructs, created long ago by the ancient Patrons, though whether the divymm were servitors or 'children' of the Ancients and whether the divymm were left behind for some purpose or simply abandoned by these goodly Ancients when they disappeared is lost to history. Not even the divymm know, for they lack any memory or knowledge of their makers. The divymm don't have a single homeworld, instead, they've been found across many different worlds, usually in an ageless state of torpor or offline reverie. Elder members of the Bellanic Accord have recently activated a number of divymm, but lately many others have come out of suspended animation on their own, as if in response to some unseen trigger.

A divymm is a mind and living soul in a constructed body. Divymms are physically powerful, and intellectually cognizant, but are often emotionally detached. Their purely mechanical body presents an emotive obstacle between their psyche and those around them. Divymms often find their emotions seemingly diluted by how they artificially interface with their environment. Divymms each have their own unique personality and identity and many work hard to convey who they are to those around them.

Despite their physical forms, most divymms strongly identify themselves as having a specific gender. Divymms are known to react badly to the implication that they have no emotions or any inference that they are just machines.

Divymms come in many different shapes and sizes, apparently suited for a variety of purposes at the time of their construction. Some are completely humanoid, taking on more of the characteristics of an android, and others are hulking brutes, chiseled in stone, metal, or with other strange technological attachments. Given sufficient time and resources, divymms can modify their mechanical form considerably and many make cosmetic changes to suit their own personal tastes and personality.

Divymms all recognize one another as emanating from the same source, or lifeforge as they refer to it. Divymms often have a glowing rune or sigil on their forehead or chest, but even without this, divymms can automatically identify each other and share a bond passed down by the Ancients which unites them far beyond the roles they currently serve. Nevertheless, at the present time, the divymm are an important part of the Bellanic Accord, defending the multiverse from malevolent incursions.



HETZUUD

A silvery puddle-like blob of malleable goo transforms into a new shape, its surface rapidly taking on detailed textures and color.

HETZUUD

CR 3

XP 800

NE Medium ooze (shapeshifter)

Init +1; Senses blindsight (vibration) 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft.;

Perception +8

DEFENSE

HP 35

EAC 14; KAC 15

Fort +4; Ref +2; Will +4

Immunities ooze immunities

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., climb 10 ft.

Melee slam +9 (1d4+7 B)

Ranged static arc pistol +7 (1d6+3 E; critical arc 2)

Offensive Abilities merge

STATISTICS

Str +4; Dex +1; Con +1; Int +0; Wis +1; Cha +1

Skills Athletics +8; Bluff +13; Disguise +13; Stealth +13; Sense Motive +8

Languages Common, Hetzuud (tactile), Ultari

Other Abilities change shape (any [same size category]), compression, internal storage, mimic object, perfect copy

Equipment second skin, static arc pistol with 2 batteries (20 charges each)

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, or colony (3–12)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Internal Storage (Ex) A hetzuud can secrete and carry equipment inside itself, but can only store items of light or negligible bulk which are smaller than the hetzuud's current form (assumed or natural) with a total bulk less than the 5 + hetzuud's Strength modifier. If a hetzuud spends a full action when using its change shape ability, it can don armor or clothing stored inside it, or ready up to two weapons or other items. A hetzuud can retrieve an item stored inside itself as a swift action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Merge (Ex) An adjacent hetzuud can merge with another willing hetzuud as a full action without provoking an attack of opportunity. Up to four hetzuud can merge in this fashion, creating a hetzuud amalgam. Hetzuud within an amalgam remain in constant communication with one another and can coordinate their actions to greater effect while joined, immediately gaining Improved Initiative as a bonus feat. All hetzuud within an amalgam can continue making their own independent actions, manifesting pseudopods to make slam attacks and wielding any manufactured weapons, magic items, or other gear as normal. If a merged hetzuud leaves a square adjacent to the amalgam, it must spend another full action to do so and loses all benefits of the amalgam. A successful sunder combat maneuver dealing at least 1

Hit Point of damage per CR of an amalgam's constituent members can forcibly separate a single hetzuud from an amalgam (determined randomly). An amalgam provides the following additional effects to all its members:

- **Collaborative Resistance:** When making saving throws against individually targeted effects, a hetzuud amalgam uses the highest saving throw modifier of any hetzuud in the amalgam.
- **Conjoined Combat:** Two or more hetzuud within an amalgam may initiate their attacks against the same foe, and they are considered to be flanking that foe as if they were in two opposite squares. In addition, as a standard action any hetzuud in an amalgam may attempt harrying fire regardless of their positioning within the amalgam.
- **Distributed Wounds:** Hetzuud within an amalgam split all Hit Point damage equally by sharing it among themselves.
- **Pliable Transposition:** As a move action, any hetzuud within an amalgam may swap places with another member of the amalgam to occupy a different square within the amalgam.
- **Size Increase:** If there are four hetzuud in the amalgam then they each gain a natural reach of 10 feet and increase their slam attack damage die to 1d6.

Mimic Object (Ex) A hetzuud can use its change shape ability to assume the shape of any inanimate object of the same size category, such as an armchair, bulky chest, door, or statue. The hetzuud cannot substantially alter its size, unless merged with more its kind (see above). A hetzuud gains a +10 racial bonus on Disguise checks when imitating an object in this manner.

Perfect Copy (Ex) When a hetzuud uses change shape, it can assume the appearance of specific individuals.

A nefarious race of sentient predatory oozes, hetzuud gained notoriety within the Ultari Hegemony as spies and infiltrators capable of altering their shape and density to interact with almost any environment. They excel at mimicking other creatures and objects by modifying their texture and coloration. Multiple hetzuud can also merge into deadlier, greater-sized oozes with dangerous combat abilities, controlling multiple pseudopods with deadly effect.

Currently, hetzuud hold low-ranking status as servitors of the Ultari Hegemony, but they aspire to much more. As a result, when the Hegemony discovered their homeworld, the hetzuud welcomed the invaders rather than resist them. Eager to leave their bleak planet and become part of a greater civilization, they've temporarily aligned themselves with a more dominant power structure, patiently awaiting the day of their own ascendance. Since then, the hetzuud have proven especially capable as warriors, spies, and saboteurs. Their ooze-like characteristics let them squeeze into enemy holdings, and their ability to perfectly duplicate other creatures makes them excellent infiltrators.

An adult hetzuud weighs around 200 pounds and can squeeze itself into 4 cubic feet, or a 1-foot-radius sphere.

ECOLOGY

The hetzuud evolved on a primordial world called Aveltdt from a simple protoplasm with chameleonic properties. Preyed upon by other primitive organisms as a source of nutrition, these mindless progenitors banded together and gradually gained communal sentience. They then honed their ability to mimic other creatures, slowly multiplying and inexorably dominating their competition. While hetzuud exhibit startling sapience for ooze creatures, they remain slow to assimilate new types of information and have difficulty developing innovative ideas without initial prototypes to copy. This puts them in a parasitic relationship with the Hegemony as they attempt to enhance their understanding of other technologies.

Hetzuud have no gender, and while they understand how other species reproduce, they consider any notion of sexual identity and gender roles irrelevant unless purposefully mimicking other creatures. Among themselves, hetzuud regard such limitations as a weakness and liability to exploit.

Hetzuud have their own tactile language, touching each other to silently and quickly communicate as if speaking aloud. Hetzuud also speak the Common language of their birth world, and often learn Aklo, Jagladine, Onaryx, Ultari, and Undercommon, as well as the local language of any species they intend to mimic.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Hetzuud maintain a culture of collective development and expansion rather than individual rights. This stems from the natural instinct to merge together for mutual protection. They prove inherently amoral, regarding other species as rivals to dominate. Hetzuud place great emphasis on contributing to their overall society, and hetzuud who champion individualism serve little purpose, leading their peers to inevitably shun, exile, or destroy them.

Procreation of a new hetzuud brood can occur between two or more individuals. They must remain merged during the incubation process, which takes eight hours. Afterward, a newborn hetzuud separates from its parents and takes 2 years to mature. To produce viable offspring, hetzuud must ensure considerable genetic diversity between participating parents and they can sense by touch if another member of their species would make a suitable mate. Producing more than one offspring per merge is considered taboo.

Hetzuuds have little parental instinct or loyalty beyond their natural impulse to preserve their race. They place their young in caves or enclosed areas safe from other predators, and then leave them to grow and mature unattended, feeding on whatever sustenance they can acquire. Elder hetzuud reclaim their young after they learn to mimic other creatures and objects, training them as workers, retainers, or soldiers. After a period of indentured servitude to pay for such training, young hetzuud eventually seek their own fortune, but always in close alliance with the collective society.

The governing leadership of hetzuud enclaves inevitably consists of long-lived elders grown to Huge size. They store and process information collected from other species and civilizations in an attempt to use such knowledge for the betterment of hetzuud society. When a momentous decision concerns the entire race, these elders merge together in an extremely rare act. The last such convocation occurred when the hetzuud decided to join the Ultari Hegemony.



NARAV LIZARD

This bulky smooth-scaled lizard has a long prehensile tail that gently sways as it moves. A ribbon-like tongue flicks out from its wide maw.

NARAV LIZARD

CR 3

XP 800

N Large animal

Init +5; **Senses** blindsense (vibration) 30 ft., low-light vision;

Perception +13

DEFENSE

HP 40

EAC 14; **KAC** 16

Fort +7; **Ref** +7; **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee bite +8 (1d4+7 P) or tail +11 (1d6+7 B and grab)

Offensive Abilities autonomic tail

STATISTICS

Str +4; **Dex** +1; **Con** +2; **Int** -4; **Wis** +1; **Cha** -2

Feats Jet Dash

Skills Athletics +8, Stealth +8, Survival +0 (+8 when tracking by scent)

Other Abilities regrow limb, tracking (scent)

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate or warm forests and plains

Organization solitary, pair, or lounge (3–12)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Autonomic Tail (Ex) A narav can detach its tail from its body as a swift action. This deals 2d6 damage to the narav, but thereafter the narav's tail can act on its own for a number of minutes equal to 10 + the narav's Constitution modifier. A narav that is grappling or pinning a creature can detach its tail at the start of its turn before making a grapple combat maneuver to maintain the grapple. This allows the detached tail to maintain the grapple or pin while freeing the lizard to take other actions.

While detached, a narav's tail acts on the narav's initiative count as a separate Medium-sized creature. Blind and effectively mindless, the tail attacks any adjacent creature other than the narav that detached it. The tail has the same statistics as the narav except as follows:

EAC 12, **KAC** 14; **HP** 13; **Melee** tail +5 (1d6+7 B and grab);

Other Abilities mindless; **Speed** 0 ft.; **Space** 5 ft.

Regrow Limb (Ex) Naravs

can regrow a lost limb or tail. This regenerative process takes one month during which time the narav requires roughly 50% more food than normal. As long as a narav's detached tail remains active, it can reattach to the creature's body if pressed firmly against the creature's tail stub for at least 1

minute. In this case, the narav cannot use its tail for 24 hours while its internal structures rebind and recover. A *regenerate* spell, a technological device (such as a regeneration bed), or an effect that grants the narav the regeneration universal creature ability removes this recovery period.

Inhabiting much of Kylorn's Sunset lands and even surviving on the fringes of the Daylands, the narav lizard was one of the first creatures domesticated by native Kylornians. Naravs are employed as working beasts or mounts, and also bred for their hide which produces a tough but supple leather. Narav lizard meat is tough, stringy, and tasteless; most Kylornians would only consider eating it in exceptional circumstances. A typical adult narav stands between 4 and 5 feet high at the shoulder, is 16 feet long from snout to end of tail, and weighs around 1,000 pounds. Naravs live for about 30 years, they lay clutches of around 10 eggs and bury them, these hatch after 8 months of incubation.

Naravs are frugivorous, enjoying a diet of fruit or berries when available, but can subsist on meat or other plant life if necessary. The consistent environment of the Sunset lands suits the narav lizard's ectothermic nature, giving it ample opportunity to regulate its temperature and bask in sunlight.

Naravs are natural herd animals, banding together for mutual protection. Naravs are able to rear up on their hind legs while stationary. A lounge of wild naravs usually station at least one lookout, who rises up to monitor the area for danger. When the group is threatened, one or more adult naravs use their tails to restrain the intruder while the lounge either flees or attacks the foe in concert. Domesticated naravs are loyal and curious beasts, and often approach other creatures simply to investigate them.



TOXIC ERADICATOR

A churning fog of shimmering green vapors roils furiously, with fetid fumes billowing out from the depths of the sickly cloud.

TOXIC ERADICATOR

CR 9

XP 6,400

NE Large ooze

Init +6; Senses blindsight (vibration) 60 ft., sightless;

Perception +17

Aura mephitic smog (30 ft., DC 16)

DEFENSE

HP 145

EAC 22; KAC 24

Fort +13; Ref +9; Will +6

Defensive Abilities vaporous form; Immunities ooze immunities

OFFENSE

Speed fly 40 ft. (Su, perfect)

Melee poison lash +22 (1d10+9 A plus eradicator toxin)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Offensive Abilities engulfing miasma (DC 16)

STATISTICS

Str –; Dex +6; Con +4; Int –2; Wis +3; Cha –2

Languages Jagladine (can't speak any language)

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Engulfing Miasma (Ex) A toxic eradicator can engulf creatures in its path as part of a standard action. It cannot make other attacks during a round in which it engulfs, moving over its opponents and affecting all that share its space. Creatures can avoid being engulfed with a successful DC 16 Reflex save (being pushed back or aside as it moves forward, as they choose), or may forego their save to attempt an attack of opportunity against the toxic eradicator. Engulfed creatures are exposed to eradicator toxin (see below).

Mephitic Smog (Su) A toxic eradicator surrounds itself with a bank of churning smog that moves with it and obscures vision within 30 feet as *fog cloud*. Any creature beginning its turn or moving within 30 feet of the toxic eradicator is nauseated (DC 16 Fortitude negates) for as long as it remains within the cloud and for 1d4 rounds thereafter. Creatures remaining within the smog must save again each round, though an effected creature beginning its turn outside the smog can attempt a new Fortitude save each round at the end of its turn to remove the nauseated condition. This is a supernatural contact affliction that penetrates the normal environmental protections of armor or a space suit, although stronger barriers, such as a *resilient sphere*, block it.

Vaporous Form (Ex) A toxic eradicator's body is composed of noxious vapors rather than being truly incorporeal, but it shares all traits of the incorporeal subtype except as follows: It cannot move through solid objects or barriers but can pass through holes or openings as small as 1 inch in diameter with no reduction in speed. It is affected by wind conditions as if it were three size categories smaller.



ERADICATOR TOXIN

Type poison (contact); Save Fortitude DC 16

Track Constitution; Frequency 1/round for 6 rounds

Cure 2 consecutive saves

Created as a living bio-weapon by Jagladine scientists, the aptly named toxic eradicator was initially developed to purge the unsuccessful or dangerous results of Jagladine's tampering and experimentation. The toxic eradicator was designed with just enough intelligence to slavishly obey its masters but with more than enough cunning to make it a relentless hunter of its victims. The main inbuilt limitation of the toxic eradicator is that its only attack vector is poison. Any creature which is immune to poison is completely safe from a toxic eradicator's attack, a fact that the toxic eradicator has been bred to recognize. Genetically programmed to kill, a toxic eradicator focuses its attacks on a single opponent and only retreats if all of its remaining foes are seemingly immune to its poison. In combat, it uses its pinpoint poisoner ability against a foe that it sees performing certain actions, such as drinking something, reading a scroll, or casting a spell, and afterwards seems immune to its attacks. Without orders to follow, a toxic eradicator usually finds an indoor or underground area, ideally one with small cracks or vents that it can use to move through and lurks there waiting for more victims.

ALIEN TREASURES

ATMOSPHERE VISOR (HYBRID) LEVEL 1 PRICE 150

Armor Upgrade (Any, 1 Slot) Bulk L

This transparent ovoid mask has an ornately sculpted electrum neck-guard engraved with spiraling tracery. Its enchantments continuously supply air without relying on the armor's environmental protections.

CHIMES OF WARNING LEVEL 2 PRICE 60 (PAIR)

Hybrid Item Bulk L

These delicate crystalline chimes always come in pairs. When one chime is struck firmly (requiring either a move action or an attack), it creates no noise but unseen vibrations flow out toward the other chime up to 3 miles away. When the vibrations reach the other chime, they cause it to ring loudly with a clear tone audible up to 60 feet away in noisy conditions or up to 180 feet away in a quiet space. This resounding tone rises in pitch and after 1 round both chimes shatter into nonmagical fragments.

CONVOCATION STONE LEVEL 11 PRICE 29,000

Magic Item Bulk 2

This dark gray, rough-hewn granite disk is 1 foot in diameter and 2 inches thick with chiseled symmetric runes on both sides. To activate the disk, two creatures with at least 3 Intelligence must hold the disk and concentrate for 3 rounds on a specific individual they both know, with concentration checks (using the *convocation stone's* caster level and each creature's Wisdom modifier) required to maintain concentration if they take damage or are otherwise distracted. If either creature's concentration is disrupted, the 3 rounds of concentration must begin again. If the concentration is completed and the creature they have chosen is on the same plane and within 900 miles of the disk, that creature receives a mental message with the names of the two creatures and a request that it be teleported to them. The target creature may ignore the request or may accept it within 1 round.

If the offer is accepted, the target creature is transported to the location of the *convocation stone* (as *teleport*). If the target creature fails to arrive, the creatures that triggered the convocation stone receive no information about whether

the creature refused their request, was out of range, or was otherwise unable to accept the teleport.

A *convocation stone* can be used four times per day, and each attempt to contact a creature, whether successful or not, expends at least one daily use. A single daily use allows one Medium-sized or smaller creature (carrying gear or objects up to its maximum capacity) to teleport adjacent to the stone with no chance of error. If the area around the stone is unable to support the creature, the teleportation fails. Teleporting a Large creature costs 2 uses and a Huge creature costs 4 uses.

DAUNTLESS JACKET LEVEL 4 PRICE 2,250

Magic Item (Worn) Bulk L

Edged with an understated trim, this long-sleeved garment is both elegant and functional. You gain a +2 bonus on initiative checks.

When you attempt an opposed ability or skill check, such as Perception vs. Stealth or Bluff vs. Sense Motive, you can spend a Resolve Point to reroll your check. You must decide to use this ability after rolling but before learning the results of the check. You must take the second result, even if it is worse.

ENERGY PROJECTION LEVEL 6 WEAPON FUSION

You can make attacks with this weapon at a range of up to 120 feet, dealing its normal energy damage. Extending a weapon's power this way expends twice the normal number of charges (or ammunition). Weapons without charges or ammunition are instead taxed for a minute, unable to make another attack like this.

Only melee weapons that deal purely energy damage can benefit from this fusion.



APPENDIX: ALIEN TREASURES

ORB OF VENERABLE MEMORY LEVEL 7 PRICE 5,000

Magic Item **Bulk L**

An indistinct darkened core lies at the center of this fist-sized sphere of dull gray crystal. These orbs are said to hold the memories (though not the personality or soul) of revered elders, with the center of the orb now a distilled reflection of their cognizant mind. When the bearer holds the orb and stares into it as a standard action he or she receives fragments of insight and acumen garnered over the long lifetime of this elder, granting her an insight bonus based on her age category on the next Intelligence— or Wisdom—based skill or ability check she makes within the next minute. This bonus is +4 if the user has lived less than 50% of the average lifespan of its species, +3 if its age is at least 50% but less than 75% of that average, and +2 if it has lived 75% or more of the average lifespan. The orb can be used three times per day, and no individual can contact more than one mind a day this way.

WRAPPING OF VEILED ENCHANTMENT LEVEL 3 PRICE 1,000

Magic Item (Worn) **Bulk L**

This thin semi-translucent covering clings like a gentle film to its wearer. You gain a +2 enhancement bonus on Disguise and Stealth checks. When a creature dons a *wrapping of veiled enchantment* any spells or magical effects currently active on the creature have their magical auras concealed. Detect magic doesn't detect these concealed spells or the wrapping's enchantment, although more powerful divination spells (such as *arcane sight*) do detect the concealed spells if the caster succeeds at a DC 11 Will save.

NECROMANTIC BOX

MINOR ARTIFACT

Magic Item **Bulk 3**

The *necromantic box* is a potent magical receptacle designed to contain the bodily remains of a single dead creature. The box can hold only one creature's body, regardless of size. The box can be opened or closed and sealed as a full action, but only if there aren't more than one creature's remains within it. The interior and opening of the box magically resizes accommodate adding or removing a body of up to Gargantuan size, but it otherwise retains its normal dimensions of 2 feet wide by 4 feet long and 2 feet tall.

While sealed, the *necromantic box* and any remains inside it are protected from all divination spells. No divination spell save for those employed by the gods can detect the *necromantic box* or the remains within it. Regardless of what it is constructed from, a lich's phylactery or other object that contains a soul counts as bodily remains when placed in the box. Any other equipment or objects within the box, which are not a creature's bodily remains, can be detected normally. While within the box, any creature's remains are perfectly preserved as though no time passed.

If the body of a creature killed within the last minute is placed in the box and the box closed and sealed, the creature's soul is trapped in the box and that creature cannot be brought back to life until the box is reopened. If the physical remains of an undead creature which has been destroyed within the last week (including a ghost which has been laid to rest) are sealed in the box for 1 full week, then the undead creature is returned to unlife at the end of the week, provided the creature's soul hasn't been restored to life in the meantime. The newly revived undead creature initially has a number of Hit Points equal to its current CR and loses all currently prepared spells or unused spell slots.

DESTRUCTION

A *necromantic box* can be destroyed by placing inside the remains of an intelligent undead creature who willingly chose to sacrifice and destroy itself.



GAZETTEER

KYLORN, THE SUNSET WORLD

"Do you think me a fool stranger? You claim to come from a land where the sun moves across the sky. The sun never moves, it rests in the same position in the firmament as it always has! If it were to move to hang over us then the land around would surely turn barren, wither, and die. Yes, if you were to travel far enough sunward then you would reach the Daybreak lands and then eventually the Daylands but that would be because you would have travelled much closer to where the sun actually is. I think maybe you have been to the deserts of the Sun Lands and the endless burning heat and blinding light have scorched your brain and driven you mad. That, and the well-known fact that those who dwell on the edge of Daylands are all notorious for being thieves, brigands, and liars, like you!"

That said, your skin is a strange sickly color, not a healthy mauve like ours. So maybe you're a disease carrier, or perhaps some kind of filthy spy from a barbaric Night Lands tribe, in any case you are under arrest and are coming with us!"

A first meeting with Captain Rhiach of the Ryvanian Imperial Patrol

At first, a stranger to Kylorn might only see the idyllic Sunset lands where the constant light from an eternal sunset produces glorious ever-changing skylines of myriad hues and shades of color. Looking further afield quickly reveals that one side of the planet is a burning desert, continually scorched by sunlight, the other a frozen wilderness of unending night.

However, there are still dangers in the fertile habitability zone which lies between day and night, living bioweapons and other vestiges of a long forgotten war. A war which climaxed when ancient weapons of unimaginable power halted were used to halt Kylorn's planetary rotation.

Beneath the planet's surface lie seemingly endless tunnels and vaults from this time. Deep underground there are sealed vaults holding potent knowledge and powerful technologies. Here can also be found the keepers of these vaults: highly intelligent guardian automatons still following ancient directives as well as the undying remnants of the original Kylornians who hold devoted loyalty to their undead ruler.

Kylorn has many valuable resources and ancient mysteries, but are the people of Kylorn ready to retake the stage of the greater multiverse again? Only time will tell.

PREHISTORY

Long ago, Kylorn was an ancient Patron stronghold world. The planet was attacked repeatedly by the malignant Principalities as they waged interstellar war against the Patrons. The Patrons and their allies tunneled out a multitude of vaults and tunnels deep beneath Kylorn to provide refuge from the evil minions of the Principalities. Finally, the Principalities used one of their most powerful weapons to halt Kylorn's planetary rotation. This cataclysmic event and its aftermath became known on Kylorn as the End of Time. Kylorn's remaining population faced extinction as their supplies and atmosphere slowly ran out. The vaults below the surface started to go deathly silent.

Seeking the means to extend their lives until the planet recovered, some chose to transfer their minds into artificial bodies, becoming a society known as the Servitors. Many others followed their Empress, sacrificing themselves in necromantic rituals to become undead abominations known collectively as the Undying. For thousands of years these two groups endured a hostile standoff as the planet's surface ecosystem slowly reached a new equilibrium.

After much deliberation the Servitors unlocked some of the ancient vaults holding the Patron's genetic seed material to trigger a genesis-like event from which sentient people and many other flora and fauna emerged to find their ecological niche and footing in the Sunset lands. These new natives have some adaption to Kylorn's tidally locked state, but are still undeveloped and lack advanced technology.

CLIMATE

While Kylorn remains tidally locked, over long ages the planet has eventually reached a form of environmental equilibrium. Kylorn's size and distance from the sun has aided in reforming a sustainable atmospheric environment after the End of Time. The day side of the planet is scorching but not actually hot enough to boil away the oceans on that side and the dark side of the planet is frozen but the positions of oceans and landmasses prevent too much of the planet's water being trapped forever as sheet ice. There is a large amount of atmospheric circulation on Kylorn as heat on the day side evaporates water causing gale force winds to blow across the face of planet. While very strong, these winds are most prevalent over Kylorn's oceans, leading to most inhabitants to regard sailing these oceans as far too dangerous. Large mountain ranges and other geographic features mean that weather patterns in the habitability zone



are similar to temperate areas of many other planets. On the cold night side of Kylorn, the strong winds regularly produce ferocious blizzards but also lead to the circulation of water vapor through evaporative air flow. While ice forms over the oceans on the night side, much of it is also continuously melted by warm ocean currents circulating from the day side. There are a few isolated land regions where the ice grows to well over 100 yards thick but on average the ice sheet remains less than 30 feet thick in most areas of the night side. Kylorn lost a significant portion of its atmosphere during the End of Time and the planet's air is thinner than most other habitable worlds, the equivalent of a high pass in a mountainous area of a normal world.

TECHNOLOGY

While there are many pockets of advanced technology on Kylorn, nearly all of Kylorn's human cultures are at an early feudal level of advancement. High-tech devices are exceedingly rare on the surface, but are not unknown to the planet's current inhabitants. These technological wonders have usually been recovered by explorers from dangerous underground vaults or other perilous places. As such, Kylornians are extremely wary of any unfamiliar technological mechanism, but they are willing to cautiously accept such things once they have been thoroughly tested,

if they can provide a useful function. It is not unknown for a travelling stranger to be asked to leave any machines or other technological tools they possess at the entrance to a settlement for the safety of the community. The Servitors faction also occasionally provides technological assistance to the Sunset Kingdoms but these advancements are always of a non-military nature. Sunset Kingdom farmers have slowly grown used to seeing large bubble-shaped harvesting machines gathering ripe grain in the fields.

GEOGRAPHY

While the shape of Kylorn's continents bears some small resemblance to what the planet looked like before the End of Time, much of the planet's geography has changed beyond recognition. There are virtually no signs on the planet's surface of the ancient Patron civilization that once inhabited Kylorn. The massive earthquakes caused by the planet's rotation being suddenly halted led to ongoing seismic activity, triggering the eruption of many of Kylorn's long dormant volcanoes as well as the formation of numerous new ones. Fortunately the long ages that have passed since the End of Time have helped heal the scars this cataclysmic event left on the planet.



THE SUN LANDS

Considered a myth by many people of the habitability zone, this small continental island lies entirely on Kylorn's day side and is a bright hellish landscape bombarded by unrelenting heat and light. Very few Kylornians have ventured through its barren waterless terrain. Those that return speak of strange trees made of reflective metal, animals formed from sand, and invisible beings composed of pure light that speak with melodic voices and the sound of the tolling of bells. Successful expeditions to these distant shores are extremely rare but when an explorer returns with a powerful artefact of great value, then those who are foolishly brave reconsider crossing the burning oceans to seek their own fortune.

THE DAYLANDS

The Daylands are a series of sandy deserts and barren wastes; only where there is water does any life grow. Even the coastal areas of the Daylands are considered uninhabitable by most Kylornian natives as the warm ocean temperature means the shallows teem with poisonous algae. Those natives who do eke out a living here are often outcasts or criminals. Kylornians from other parts of the habitability zone consider all Daylanders to be somewhat mad. Valuable metal or mineral deposits and rumors of buried technological caches often draw the desperate to these lands seeking a quick fortune. The lucky ones find work at the one of the land's remote settlements but the bones of many of the unlucky simply lie where they fall in this harsh unrelenting landscape.

THE DAYBREAK LANDS

A combination of greater sunlight, atmospheric conditions, and strong prevailing winds from the sunlit side of Kylorn combine to make the Daybreak Lands significantly dryer than the Sunset Kingdoms. Those who live here see shade as a blessing and townships usually form only where there is both sufficient water and protection from the sun. The arid conditions mean that only a few varieties of grain are hardy enough to produce viable crops. Self-sufficient colonies have developed here, but the distances between them have prevented the effective formation of larger governing bodies. Travel between townships is frequently dangerous due to bandits and dangerous monsters but long wagon trains guarded by lizard riding escorts travel the dusty trails to bring trade goods to isolated communities.

THE SUNSET LANDS

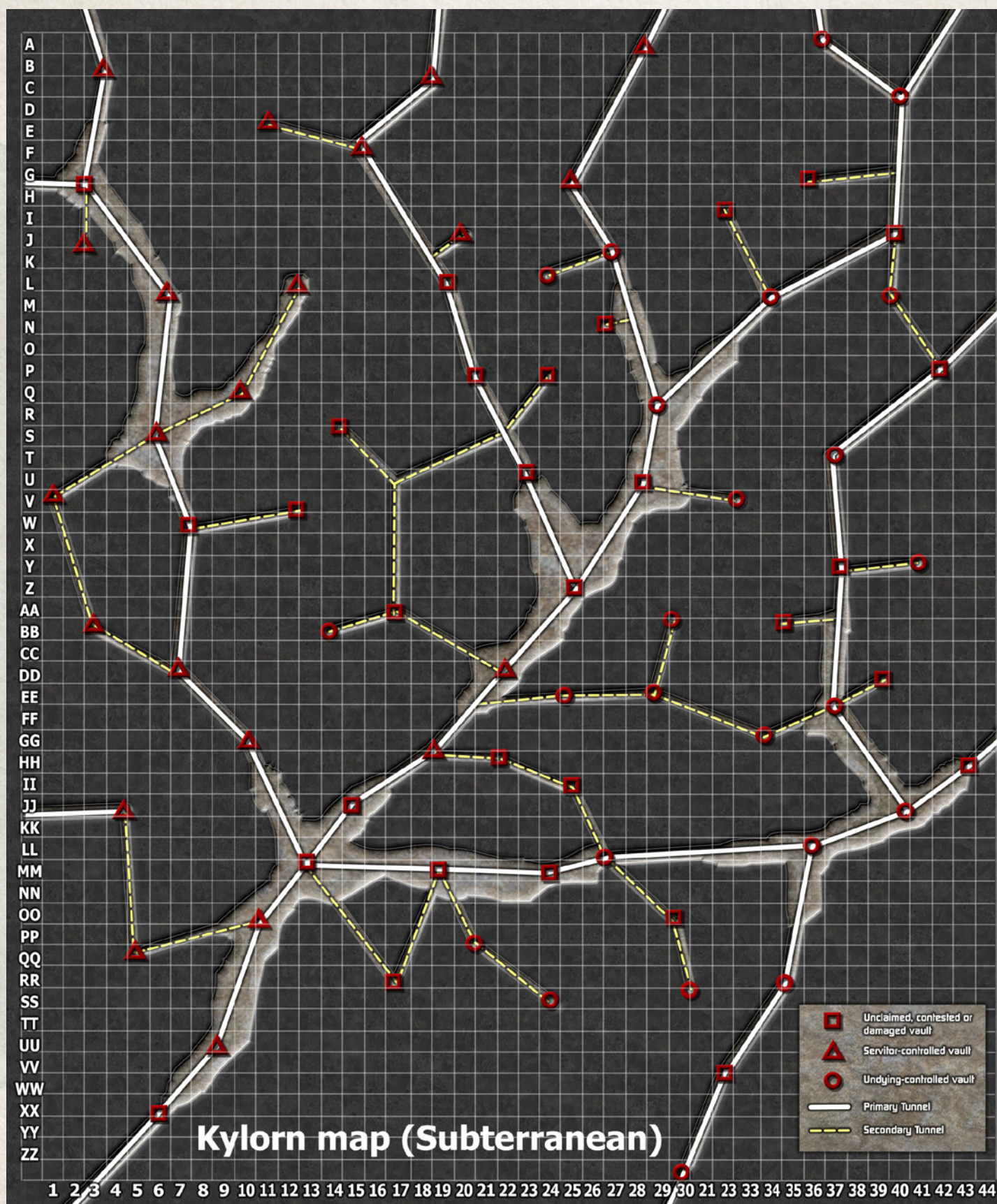
As well as displaying a continuous yet ever-changing sunset, the Sunset Kingdoms possess some of the best environmental conditions for food production on Kylorn. The land is divided into a series of kingdoms, which all in theory hold loyalty to a Prime Monarch who leads in times of great threat, but this position has remained vacant for as long as any can remember.

The kingdom of Aquilaea's island holdings extend across the great northern lake. Their fishing fleets provide a surplus of fish and Aquilaeans ships and merchants venture far and wide to trade. Much of the hilly kingdom of Guria is terraced with gardens and vineyards that take advantage of the consistent sunlight. The kingdom exports much of its wine as well as extracting seams of valuable gemstones from several rich mining operations.

The wide golden wheat fields of the kingdom of Gamraeg produce much of the grain in Sunset lands. Gamraeg has remained at peace with the other Sunset Kingdoms for generations but has been known to suffer attacks from strange wild creatures from the tablelands to the south as well as bandit raids from the mountainous Daybreak Lands. The kingdom of Heorran is small but smelts great amounts of iron and other base metals from its rich mines in the northern hills. While Heorran is considered the most traditional of the Sunset kingdoms, it also holds history and oral lore in great esteem. Bards, poets, and other sagely figures are well respected and numerous monasteries and places of learning dot Heorran's rolling hills. Imperial Ryvan in the south is the eldest of the Sunset kingdoms and its expansive capital city is renowned for its fluted towers, sweeping boulevards, and elegant gardens. Ryvan is ruled by the beautiful Queen Sathi who, while young and newly ascended to the throne, is beloved by her people.

THE DUSK LANDS

The Dusk Lands are colder and darker than the Sunset Kingdoms but are still habitable. The gentle purplish glow across the sky gives the feel of an early Autumn evening on a world with a regular rotation. Much of the soil here is tough and yields sustenance only grudgingly. The rugged folk that inhabit these lands are fiery and stubborn, but also consider themselves to be fierce, courageous, and independent. They raise herds of livestock and cultivate mushrooms and other fungi for sustenance. Dusklanders often cheekily raid each other's settlements for sport and to improve their herds but they are quick to band together against a foreign threat. Some of the finest alcoholic spirits in the entire habitability zone comes from the distilleries and brew houses of the Dusk Lands.



THE TWILIGHT LANDS

The frosty moors and sparse thickets of spiny plant life slowly gives way to tundra and snowfields as the sky darkens as one ventures deeper into this wilderness. People dwell here, either in small settlements or as nomads who follow the wandering herds of wild lumbering megafauna that roam the frozen plains. The most valuable exports from these lands are the thick hides and fur of these creatures, which are difficult to hunt, and unknown in other regions of Kylorn. The much of the sky is dark enough that the stars are visible in the firmament, which has occasionally been known to draw adventurous astronomers from other parts of the habitability zone.

THE NIGHT LANDS

The dark icy Night Lands are a frozen wasteland where bitter winds whip across the landscape driving flurries of snow and sleet. However, there is still life here, hot springs and volcanoes provide some warmth to a small area around them. A large inland sea which has never frozen over sustains fish and in turn creatures that live off these fish. Small barbaric tribes face a constant struggle to survive and sometimes raid into the more fertile Twilight lands, but there is almost no civilization in this land of gnawing wind and cold night's sky.

THE DEAD VAULTS

Most of the underground tunnels and vaults built by the ancient Patrons have survived the long ages. The natives themselves know that there are an enormous series of tunnels underneath their world and that these are extremely dangerous. However, the majority of Kylornians would prefer to seal a newly discovered underground entrance closed rather than risk exploring them. They are unaware of the shadowy cold war between the Servitors and the Undying that takes place here. These passages span the planet; a few are connected by a series of magical transportation devices that run through endless miles of tunnel at lightning speed. However, only a small fraction of these are still operational, meaning that traversing these hundreds of miles of passages can often be a journey of weeks or even months. Dangerous things lurk in the dark deserted tunnels, sentient biohazards, deadly mechanisms, and other threats leftover from the ancient conflict. There are technological treasures to be found in sealed vaults but these are nearly always guarded and controlled by members of the Servitors or the Undying.

THE SERVITORS

The Servitors are a diverse society of intelligent constructs composed of a variety of clockwork automatons, intelligent golems, and the divymm. Some of these Servitors, most notably the divymm, were created by the Patrons themselves in the time before the war with the Principalities. Others

used technologies to transfer their consciousness into artificial bodies and other non-biological vessels to prolong their lives after the planetary devastation of the End of Time. Long ago, the Servitors were charged with watching over repositories and alien libraries of ancient knowledge, many of which are still sealed in vaults far beneath the surface. After Kylorn's environment stabilized, the Servitors tapped into Patron genetic seed material in an effort to repopulate the surface world. Most Servitors see these new surface natives as emergent young sentient life which needs time and occasional nurturing to grow. The Servitors limit their direct interaction with the natives, preferring to allow them to find their own way, but occasionally offer aid in the form of knowledge and peaceful mechanical improvements.

THE UNDYING

In the dark times following the End of Time, Kylorn's population faced extinction. The devastated planet could not support them and their food stores were almost gone. The Kylorn's Empress issued a dread edict, she and her subjects would not quietly surrender to death – they would hold on to their world no matter the cost. The Empress's horrific order was to enact a massive series of necromantic rituals to transform the remaining population into the undead. Some chose to defy their ruler but many obeyed and became the evil faction known as the Undying. For thousands of years the Undying came into conflict with the Servitors, seeing these sentient constructs as disobedient, or traitors to their Empress. When the Servitors repopulated the surface world, some of the Undying returned to the habitability zone to feed upon these new inhabitants like cattle. However the Undying Empress imposed limits on these depredations. Some in the Servitor factor believe that the Undying and their Empress are playing the long game, biding their time until the new native Kylornians to advance sufficiently to become worthy of being turned into new undying subjects.

POPULATION

The population of the Sunset lands is entirely human. These humans all come from the same genetic source which has several subtle differences from the humanity of other worlds. The most obvious is that Kylornians have a distinct purple tinge to their skin which varies from a pale mauve to a deep lavender. Kylornians who subsist in and around the burning Daylands have silvery eyes with dark irises that allow them to stare across the bright barren landscape without going blind. Those Kylornians who dwell in the dim shadowy territories of the Twilight Lands and the Night Lands have eyes that seem to glow and have developed exceptional night vision to allow them to hunt effectively in near darkness. Despite not having a day/night cycle or even seasonal changes, Kylornians have a highly accurate sense of time and body clock. Most can easily measure an hour to within a couple of minutes and almost all can will themselves to sleep for an exact amount of time before waking.



TIDALLY LOCKED

Kylorn's lack of rotation affects almost every facet of life in the Sunset Lands. The fact that the sun always rests in the same part of the sky has a myriad of consequences for every creature inhabiting Kylorn's surface. Towns and cities are usually built in elongated lines so that most citizens can gain the light and warmth of the sun's rays. Aristocrats and upper classes nearly always live on higher ground, or desire to acquire property there, not only to look down on those below them but more so to gain an unobstructed angle to sunlight. Those areas naturally in the shade, such as those over the rise of a hill, often become poorer quarters or slums. Some of the larger cities have formal laws about the exact height that a structure can be built and many times in the past bloody feuds have been fought over shading out a neighbor's sunlight. The city of Tusca even has a series of huge mirrors set up to provide extra illumination to parts of the community that would normally lie in shadow. With a constant amount of sunlight, modern day Kylornian humans have adapted their sleep cycles to suit. Most townships and even whole kingdoms have defined set hours as sleep time. This makes it easy for communities to work together and provides quiet when people are resting. Most larger settlements post 'watch guards' during this period, who patrol to curtail crime and ensure the safety of the community. Newcomers in a foreign city are advised to adjust their body clock to the local activity cycle as quickly as possible to avoid standing out. Kylornians regularly use the word 'sleep' as a noun instead of 'day'. For example, a Kylornian might say, "it will take three sleeps of travel to reach the capital."

That sunlight always comes from the same direction also affects nature. Forests grow in lengthy formations aimed to catch as much sunlight as possible and trees and plants lean toward the light with most of their foliage facing the sun to absorb solar energy. Creatures that would normally be nocturnal, crepuscular (twilight active), matutinal (morning active), or vespertine (evening active) usually only inhabit regions with a comparable light level, this means that owls are rarely seen in the Daybreak lands but are far more common in the Twilight lands.

All of this reverses in the hot barren Daybreak Lands where a scrap of shade is seen as a blessing to gain some shelter from the relentless heat and burning sun. A shaded area with a decent supply of water is an ideal place for a homestead or settlement. Most townships here have been built to take advantage of the lee of a cliff or the shade of a hill. Only a few are out in the open, and usually only when there is a vital strategic or economic reason to settle in that location, such as the large gem mining township of Sol'karr which lies in the middle of the barren Pendan plains. In these cases, much of the township is often built underground to take advantage of the insulating properties of bedrock, which provides cooler ambient temperatures. Shaded areas also have their own ecosystems with some plants maturing in differing ways depending on whether they are in direct sunlight or in the shade. Some species of flora even prefer a combination of both. The Aetherian tree grows a thick spiky white bark if in direct sunlight but has a very different appearance if growing in the shade, sprouting dense dark leafy foliage.

THE SATHI SOLAR SYSTEM

Sathi, the star at the center of the solar system around which the planet of Kylorn circles, is a bright orange-yellow sun. In stellar terms, Sathi is a solar body which has only just begun a transformation that will take many eons to become a red giant star. The unique color and hue of Sathi's light radiating out through the system produces incredible sunrises and sunsets on many of its planets.

Vesuria: When viewed from a distance Vesuria is a mottled dark red and black; this is due to thick clouds of ash and smoke in the atmosphere combined with fiery eruptions on the surface. The closest planet to the sun, Vesuria is a primordial world with entire continents of active volcanos and endless landscapes of jagged rock wracked by seismic activity. Its position relative to the sun means that this world could eventually become life-bearing, but only in millions of years when its fires of creation cool sufficiently to allow the basic building blocks of life to form.

Kylorn: Kylorn, the second planet from Sathi, was once a world with an idyllic climate but is now a tidally locked world, one side always facing the sun the other always facing away. Kylorn possesses an almost perfectly circular rotation around the sun and has no axial tilt, meaning that the planet lacks any change of seasons just as much as it lacks a cycle of day and night. In the present day Kylorn has no moon, but it did in the distant past before its rotation was halted. The current inhabitants still repeat legends of a moon, a benevolent glowing white orb that once moved across the sky and provided light, guidance, and insight to those it passed over. For those living on the edges of the scorching daylands, this moon is even said to have provided a wondrous shade and a cooling breeze to those beneath it.

Xathon: Xathon is a small ice-covered world right on the edge of planetary habitability. While it has an atmosphere easily capable of supporting humanoid life, this world's freezing temperatures mean that only creatures with extreme resistance to cold can survive here. With an arctic climate even at its equator, Xathon supports swathes of taiga that flow out into frozen deserts of tundra. Small tribes of aboriginal yeti inhabit this hyperborean environment, following the same migratory paths that their ancestors have travelled for countless generations.

Brequetha: This bright azure world is four times the size of Kylorn and is orbited by a shining ring of crystals that circle perpendicular to the planet's axis of rotation around Sathi, so that this crystal disk faces the sun. The planet itself spins in a retrograde motion, the reverse of all other planets in the system and has a 90 degree radial tilt, meaning that Brequetha is tipped over and rotates around the sun on its side. The planet has a powerful and unusual magnetic field surrounding it that interferes with both technological and magical devices. In addition to this, harsh lightning storms continuously crisscross the planet's surface making landing or exploration extremely difficult.

Kushars: Kushars is a huge pale yellow gas giant with darker bands of swirling colors running across its surface. The cause of these bands is massive windstorms which circle the planet and drive different layers of gases into the outer atmosphere. Ancient observers theorised that an enormous planar rift to the elemental plane of air lies at core of this gaseous planet, allowing untold numbers of air elementals to thrive here. Kushars has three moons that are easily large enough to be considered planets were they not caught in Kushars' orbit.

Chides: The largest of Kushars' moons, Chides has a thick water-ice shell and is striated by cracks and streaks, called lineae, randomly crisscrossing the entire globe. There are several theories about the cause of these striations, do they come from tidal flexing caused by the moon's close proximity to Kushars, tectonic eruptions of warmer ice rising to the surface, or some form of global magical effect?

Dranya: The smallest of Kushars' moons, Dranya is a barren sphere covered in countless crater pockmarks from meteor strikes hint at this moon's great age. However, deep beneath the moon's crust lie huge formations of crystal deposits. These beautiful crystal layers, some many miles thick, are honeycombed with perfectly formed polyhedral passages that somehow sustain a thin atmosphere.

Ebri: Eons ago, Ebri was once a planet in a different solar system. It was snared by Kushars when the two systems intersected. This emerald moon has endless jungles that teem with savage lifeforms, in spite of the small amount of sunlight it receives because of its distance from Sathi. The thick atmosphere, however, is both highly toxic and corrosive to outsiders.

Nuebos: This world is a cold gray world with a dense metallic core, a mantle of frozen methane, and seas of ammonia hidden under a gaseous opaque atmosphere that is volatile and unbreathable by normal humanoids. A faint glow of light can often be seen when observing the night side of the planet but whether this is a sign of intelligent life on Nuebos or simply a natural phenomenon is unknown at the present time. Nuebos has one small moon called Astrila; this dark purple sphere is highly radioactive. This radioactivity is caused by the moon's interaction with Nuebos' magnetic fields combined with significant deposits of radioactive isotopes on the surface.

Iowei: The tiny planet known as Iowei has a highly elliptical orbit that brings it closer to the sun than Nuebos at its closest but sends Iowei out almost twice that distance at planetary aphelion. It takes just over 300 Argosean years for Iowei to complete a full orbit of Sathi. Iowei is a metallic world with negligible atmosphere and its surface is a shiny cratered grey when viewed from space. The varied metals that make up this world include high concentrations of valuable skymetals buried deep within the planet.

MAGIC AND MACHINES

Kylorn is a planet where magic and the mechanical are melded to an uncanny degree. The endless alien technomagical ruins have given birth to warring societies of lifeless and deathless adversaries, but each side has striven to better understand the alien technology around them in the hope of mastering it and using that mastery to unleash destruction on their enemies and achieve total domination of the under-realms of the planet. To that end, the following character options might be encountered on this planet, or entered into by those wishing to use the secrets drawn forth from its depths, to achieve mastery over machines elsewhere.

ASTROLOGER

You have always studied the stars and their endless patterns and cycles, learning the influences of the heavenly bodies on the past, present, and future. You use the more esoteric insights you glean to bilk ignorant rubes ready to believe your erudite divinations, but you also have learned all too well that when you looked into the stars others were looking back, either with wonder or with malice.

ALTERNATE CLASS FEATURES

Watch the Stars (Ex) 2nd Level

While you can see multiple stars, whether at night or in space or simply far enough from the nearest star, you gain a +2 insight bonus to Will saves, Wisdom checks, and Wisdom-based skill checks. This bonus increases by 2 at 6th level and every 6 levels thereafter.

Guiding Star (Su) 6th level

Once per day, when you can see multiple stars as above, you can reroll a failed ability check, attack roll, saving throw, or skill check. You can apply your bonus from Watch the Stars to this new roll, even if it wouldn't normally qualify.

Commune with the Stars (Su) 12th level

While you can see multiple stars, you can spend a Resolve Point to cast *commune with nature* as a standard action. This is a spell-like ability with a caster level equal to your character level.

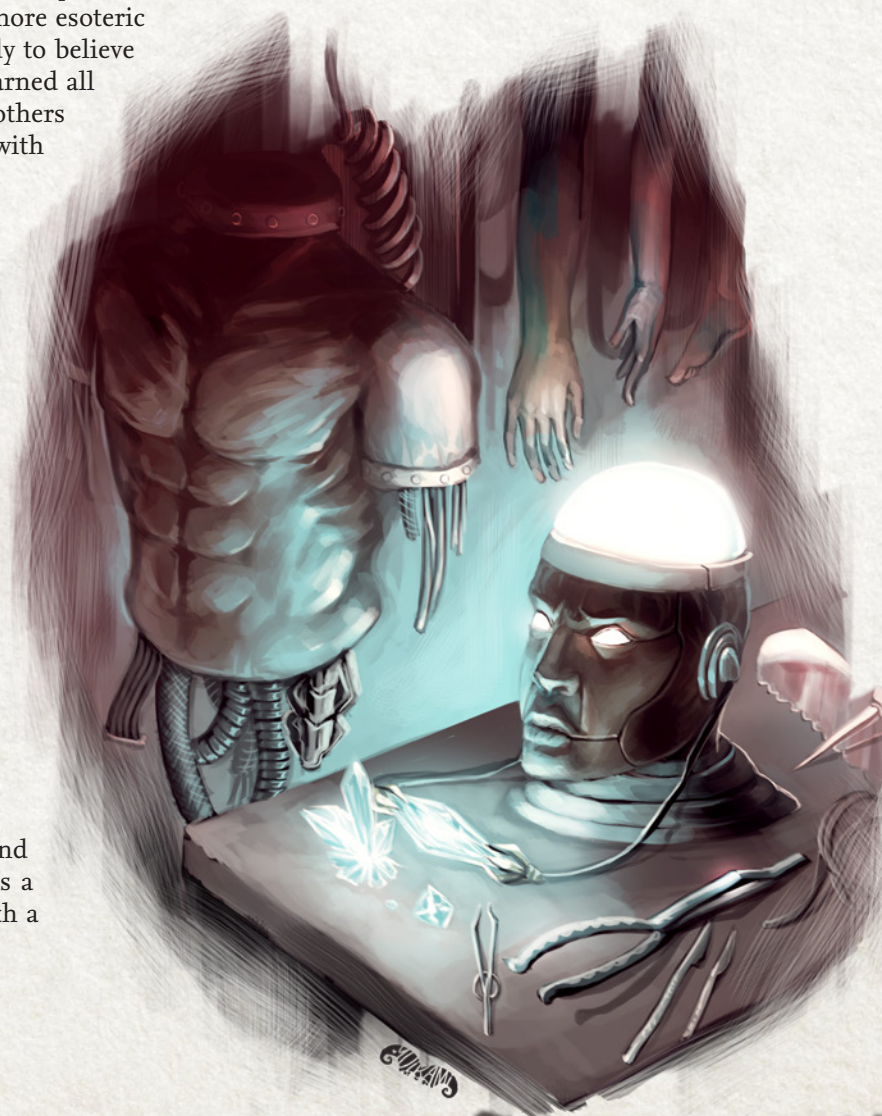
DELVER

You have studied the endless catacombs that riddle hollow worlds across the cosmos, and you are intimately familiar with the ways of deep caves and caverns, as well as the strange remnants of alien civilizations that often can be found in the deep places of the world.

ALTERNATE CLASS FEATURES

Deep Delver (Ex) 2nd Level

While you are underground, you gain a +2 insight bonus to initiative rolls, Perception checks, and Survival checks. This bonus increases by 2 at 6th level and every 6 levels thereafter.



Underground Fighter (Ex) 6th level

You gain Blind-Fight as a bonus feat. Additionally, you ignore the miss chance from concealment if your target is unable to see you or is unaware of your presence.

Tremorsense (Su) 12th level

You gain blindsense (vibration) out to 30 feet. If you already have blindsense (vibration) from another source, its range is instead increased by 30 feet.

ENGRAM CHANNELER

Beneath the surface of Kylorn, great machines hold copies of the consciousnesses of the planet's former inhabitants. Many of these were transferred into constructs, becoming Servitors. Countless others linger still within matrices of steel and crystal, waiting to be called forth. Certain folk have developed a magical knack to do just that. It is, in essence, a different method of calling up the dead. Rather than a spirit, the engram channeler taps into the stored memory of a long-dead inhabitant of Kylorn from the time of the Patrons. Bonding with such an engram provides the channeler with a wealth of insight and inspiration.

ALTERNATE CLASS FEATURES

Engram Knowledge (Su) 2nd Level

You can call on your engram to assist you, providing a +2 bonus on Engineering, Mysticism, and Physical Science checks. If you successfully use Aid Another to assist a character using one of these skills, they receive the engram's bonus in addition to the bonus you are providing with Aid Another.

Engram Scout (Su) 4th level

You can summon your engram as an incorporeal representation by entering a meditative state. As long as you remain in the state, gaining the asleep condition, except you are automatically awakened if the engram returns to you or is destroyed.

The engram is an incorporeal creature with KAC and EAC of 15 and 1 Hit Point per level. It has a supernatural fly speed of 30 feet and perfect maneuverability. It uses your skill bonuses for any skill checks. If the engram is destroyed, you lose all engram-based abilities for the remainder of the day.

Since energy deals half damage to incorporeal creatures, passing through walls carrying steam or electrical conduits can disrupt the engram scout.

Engram Rush (Su) 6th level

As a standard action, you can unleash an energized engram to attack your foes. Trace a path up to 60 feet long and roll one attack targeting EAC. Enemies (but not allies) the engram hit by that attack take 1d6 electric damage. You are

automatically considered proficient in this attack and gain weapon specialization with it.

Engram Stability (Su) 12th level

When you or another character receives the bonus from Engram Knowledge, they can take 10 on the roll even if stress or distractions would normally prevent them from doing so. They can also spend a Resolve Point to treat the die result as a 20 rather than rolling.

NANOTECH INFUSER

You have experimented with alien magitech fluids infused with microscopic robotic servants. Where others might have perished as these nanites disrupted their vitals like a corrupting virus, they awakened within you a latent communion with the machine mind and an affinity for robots, clockworks, and constructs of all kinds.

ALTERNATE CLASS FEATURES

Artificer's Touch (Su) 2nd Level

You can cast *mending* at will. In addition, you can use your nanites to disassemble constructs and objects as a melee attack against your target's EAC that deals 1d8 acid damage. You are proficient in its use, gaining weapon specialization with it at 3rd level in this class.

Nanite Adaptation (Su) 6th level

Choose acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic. You gain resistance to that damage type equal to your level in this class. You can change which damage type this applies to as a full action.

When you take electricity damage (after reduction from your resistance, if any), your nanites are rendered inoperative until the next time you take a 10-minute rest to regain Stamina Points.

Nanovirus (Su) 12th level

You can now use your artificer's touch to damage living creatures along with constructs and objects. Its damage increases to 4d8.

When you damage a creature with your artificer's touch, you can spend a Resolve Point to infect the target with a nanovirus. This works like a physical disease with a frequency of 1 hour, requiring 2 consecutive saves to cure. Any humanoid who dies from this disease rises as a cybernetic zombie (see *Starfinder Alien Archive*). These zombies instinctively recognize you as their creator and will not attack you, but are otherwise outside of your control.

Nanite Apotheosis (Su) 18th level

The nanites infusing your body have replaced most of your vital organs and body systems. You are immune to bleeding, corrode critical hit effects, disease, and poison.

PENUMBRAL ADEPT

Whether given over to the contemplation of the endless blackness between the stars, from obscurant nebulae to consuming black holes, or to the lightless depths far below the planetary surface, some spellcasters seek power in the utter absence of light and the entropic end of all things.

ALTERNATE CLASS FEATURES

Penumbra Cloak (Su) 2nd Level

While in dim light, you can attempt Stealth checks even against creatures with low-light vision or darkvision. Further, Stealth is a class skill for you. If it would already be a class skill from another source, you gain a +1 bonus to Stealth checks.

Penumbra Call (Su) 6th level

You can cast *summon creature* (see *Starfinder Alien Archive*) to summon shadow creatures as a spell-like ability by spending 1 Resolve Point. This is a 3rd-level spell with a caster level equal to your level in this class. At 12th level it is a 4th-level spell, and at 18th level it is a 5th-level spell.

ROBOT FIGHTER

Wherever sentient mechanical races arise, so too do radicals and revolutionaries devoted to purging the robotic taint from their society. They fear the potential for even seemingly benevolent mechanical minds to decide they know best how to safeguard living creatures through total domination, and these robot fighters pledge with every breath to never surrender their fundamental freedom to live, infiltrating robot-controlled bases and manufacturing to commit sabotage and slaughter of their synthetic enemies.

ALTERNATE CLASS FEATURES

Deconstruction (Ex) 2nd Level

When you damage a construct with an attack or spell, you ignore an amount of its damage reduction, hardness, and resistance equal to your level.

Fool Sensors (Ex) 6th level

You can hide from constructs and mechanical sensors without requiring concealment. The DC for you to avoid triggering the mechanical sensor of a trap is equal to the DC to disarm the trap.

While hiding from constructs or mechanical sensors, you can use the higher of your Engineering and Stealth modifiers. You can also use the *feint* action targeting constructs even if they do not have an Intelligence score.

Electromagnetic Interference (Ex) 12th level

Any weapon you wield is treated as having the *bane* fusion against constructs. Any construct failing a save against your grenade or spell with a natural 1 is stunned for 1 round.

Kill Switch (Ex) 18th level

You can make an attack on a construct as a full action. If it hits, in addition to the attack's normal effects, the construct must attempt a Fortitude save (DC 19 + your key ability modifier) or be paralyzed for 1 minute. This ignores normal construct immunities.



NEW FEATS

The following feats help characters supplement their options for combining magic and mentalism with the metal minds of robotic races and cybernetic societies.

TECHNOPATH

Your communion with machine language allows you to connect with devices with the power of thought.

Prerequisite: Limited telepathy racial ability or able to cast *mindlink*.

Benefit: You can mentally interface with machinery you are touching.

You interact with the devices as though they have simple minds. You can use Diplomacy in place of Engineering to disable devices, can use Sense Motive to assess stability or identify items rather than Engineering, and can communicate with constructs as though you share a language.

TELETECHNOPATH

Your mind seeks out communion even with distant machines.

Prerequisites: Technopath, limited telepathy racial ability or able to cast *mindlink*.

Benefit: You can mentally interface with devices out to the range of your limited telepathy racial ability. You no longer need to touch the devices to interact with them.

WALKER IN RUST

You have learned to integrate technology into your summoned creatures.

Prerequisite: Ability to cast *summon creature*.

Benefit: You can integrate electronic items, such as weapons without the analog special property, into creatures you summon with *summon creature*. The item is consumed as part of the casting (items such as artifacts that cannot be destroyed through such a means cannot be integrated with summoned creatures).

When summoning multiple creatures with the same spell, the same item must be integrated with each creature.

Armor: The summoned creature gains +2 to EAC and KAC.

Grenade: The grenade detonates when the creature is killed.

Spell Ampoule: The creature gains the benefits of the spell for its normal duration.

Spell Gem: The summoning's duration is increased by a number of rounds equal to the level of the spell stored in the spell gem.

Weapon: The creature's attacks use the weapon's damage types and critical effects. If the weapon was ranged, the creature can make that attack with a range increment of 20 feet.

Other items may have special effects at the GM's discretion.



LEGENDARY FEATS

Legendary feats are not taken as characters level up. Instead, they are granted by the GM for incredible actions or understanding beyond the ken of ordinary mortals. In the Legendary Planet Adventure Path, these feats are gained by unlocking the power of the Patrons or Principalities.

Many legendary feats scale in power based on the number of those feats a character has acquired. This will give your PCs the power to surmount the challenges in *Dead Vault Descent* and beyond.

CONSTRUCTED LEGEND (LEGENDARY)

Your drone benefits from your legendary endeavors.

Prerequisite: Drone class feature.

Benefit: For every legendary feat you possess, increase your drone's base attack bonus, KAC, and EAC by 1, and increase its Hit Points by 10.

IMPROVED LEGENDARY SURGE (LEGENDARY)

Your legendary power points give you additional benefits.

Prerequisite: Legendary Surge.

Benefit: When you use Legendary Surge to modify a die roll, add 1d8 instead of 1d6. If you have four or five legendary feats, add 1d10 instead. If you have six or more legendary feats, add 1d12 instead.

LEGENDARY EXPERTISE (LEGENDARY)

Your breadth of experience enables you to perform exceptional accomplishments in your area of expertise.

Prerequisites: Legendary Surge, expertise class feature.

Benefit: When you spend a legendary power point from Legendary Surge on a skill check for a skill you have expertise in and still fails, you can reroll the d20, the expertise die, and the die from Legendary Surge. Use the new result only if it is higher.

LEGENDARY ACCURACY (LEGENDARY)

Your attack rolls surpass the capability of most mortals.

Prerequisite: Weapon Focus.

Benefit: For every legendary feat you possess, increase your bonus to attack rolls from Weapon Focus by 1.

LEGENDARY FOCUS (LEGENDARY)

By synthesizing experience from multiple worlds, you make your spells harder to resist.

Prerequisites: Spell Focus, ability to cast spells, caster level 3rd.

Benefit: The DC of your spells is increased by 1 for every two legendary feats you possess (minimum 1).

LEGENDARY INSPIRATION (LEGENDARY)

You can draw from your planet-hopping experiences to provide unmatched inspiration for your allies.

Prerequisites: Inspiring boost envoy improvisation.

Benefit: When you use inspiring boost, the target regains 3 additional Stamina Points for every legendary feat you possess.

LEGENDARY RESISTANCE (LEGENDARY)

Your experiences on multiple worlds has taught you to keep out of harm's way.

Prerequisite: Great Fortitude, Iron Will, or Lightning Reflexes

Benefit: Your bonuses from Great Fortitude, Iron Will, and Lightning Reflexes are increased by 1 for every legendary feat you possess.

LEGENDARY SKILL (LEGENDARY)

Exposure to a vast array of worlds has sharpened your skills beyond what most can accomplish.

Benefit: When you receive an insight bonus to a skill check, that bonus is increased by 1 for every legendary feat you possess.

LEGENDARY SPECIALIZATION (LEGENDARY)

You've made your way from one world to the next by hitting harder than your enemies.

Prerequisites: Weapon Specialization, character level 3rd.

Benefit: For every legendary feat you possess, increase your bonus damage from Weapon Specialization by 2.

LEGENDARY SURGE (LEGENDARY)

Your exceptional experiences have granted you a pool of legendary power with which you can perform mighty deeds.

Benefit: You gain a pool of legendary power points. When you roll a d20, you can spend a legendary power point as a reaction after the results are revealed to add 1d6 to the result of the roll. This can change the outcome of the roll.

You have 1 legendary power point for each legendary feat you possess, including this one. When you take a 10-minute rest to regain Stamina Points or rest for eight hours, you also regain all legendary power points.

LEGENDARY TOUGHNESS (LEGENDARY)

Your experiences on different worlds have made you able to withstand more punishment than most.

Prerequisite: Toughness.

Benefit: You gain 5 Stamina Points for every legendary feat you possess.

LEGENDARY TRICK (LEGENDARY)

You've learned savvy tricks from numerous other cultures, so you always have a trick up your sleeve to catch an enemy off-guard.

Prerequisite: Trick attack class feature.

Benefit: The DC for your trick attacks is reduced by 1 for every legendary feat you possess. In addition, your effective level when determining trick attack damage is increased by the number of legendary feats you possess.

SPELL RENEWAL (LEGENDARY)

You can use your legendary power to refresh your spell slots.

Prerequisite: Legendary Surge, can cast 2nd-level spells.

Benefit: When you cast a spell, you can spend a legendary power point to regain an expended spell slot of any level lower than the one you've just cast.

STELLAR LEGEND (LEGENDARY)

Travel between worlds has taught you to leap effortlessly between stellar modes.

Prerequisites: Legendary Surge, stellar mode class ability.

Benefit: When you use a zenith revelation (including Black Hole or Supernova), you can spend a legendary power point to become attuned to the opposite mode rather than unattuned.

SURGING STRIKE (LEGENDARY)

Your already-powerful strikes become even more destructive.

Prerequisite: Legendary Surge.

Benefit: When you spend a legendary power point from Legendary Surge on an attack roll and that attack hits, it deals an additional 1d8 damage for every legendary feat you possess.



MACHINE LANGUAGE

By Chris A. Jackson

Sometimes it's all I can do to keep from laughing at the irony that seems to haunt me like a sarcastic ghost. I tried to keep a straight face as I stepped up to the very same gate I'd covertly helped repair only a few months before. Someone else had finished the job, and had been the first to travel through the Thanex Coterie's newest interplanetary portal, but I felt a twinge of satisfaction as I stepped through and the light of a thousand stars exploded around me.

Then, of course, I felt like my head would explode.

I also felt biting cold deep in my bones. Kylorn is a one-face world with respect to its sun, and the Thanex gate emerges on the much colder, dark side of the surface. Once opened, the indigenous and ageless constructs—known as the divymm—built a structure to shelter it from the only available building material: ice. Coffee would have helped both the headache and the cold, but I wasn't likely to get any here. I should have smuggled some with me.

A world without coffee... Talk about a trade opportunity.

Kylorn didn't have much of anything yet. The Accord had initiated preliminary trade with the divymm, but the constructs didn't need much and they'd had disagreements about opening direct contact between the greater multiverse and the fledgling sentients inhabiting Kylorn's narrow zone of habitability. I'd come as a negotiator, an ambassador for the Bellianic Accord, albeit a covert one. Bypassing formal channels of diplomacy can sometimes expedite relations and foster trade.

I was all for that.

I know I said I was done working for the Accord after the last time. I had money now, even my own place in the Shattered Zone with a full-immersion hot oil bath and a view of the Temrael Nebula. So why did I say yes when Tarenia came knocking on my door? Maybe after a couple of Hegemony thugs tried to kill me, I felt like I had a score to settle.

The gate's arrival area held a chaotic mix of shivering traders, hucksters, explorers, scavengers, and sight-seers all vying for the attention of harried divymm inspectors. They asked my name (I told them), searched my bag (empty), asked me why I was here (I lied), and took a small payment in gold before ushering me out of the structure and into the truly bitter cold outdoors. My clockwork heating units clicked on to keep my blood from freezing, and I hurried to the tunnels of Kylorn's sub-surface civilization.

The place had the feel of a boomtown, with enough humanoids and aliens to make a jumble that rivaled the Zel-Argose bazaar. I paused here and there just long enough to look interested and check over my shoulder. I'd been doing that a lot lately.

Call me paranoid, but am I paranoid *enough*?

I made my way to the transport depot. Kylorn's rail system is a remarkable remnant of the planet's once thriving civilization. Just like its builders, the system of high-speed rail cars is

mostly dead. If resurrected, the habitable zone would have a direct link to the Argosa gate, and civilization could thrive even further with the influx of trade. That's what the Accord wanted, and what the Hegemony opposed. The Ultari had intermittent access to Kylorn via their own gates, but their monopoly would die if my mission proved successful. Repairing the transport system would be the final twist of the knife.

And I was here to twist that knife, if the map Tarenia gave me was accurate.

I paid the entry fee and stepped aboard one of the gleaming tubular cars hovering over its crackling metal rail. Whether formed from magic, technology, or both, I didn't know or care, as long as it worked. I sat near the door and braced myself for the acceleration.

The view outside the glassteel windows blurred with motion, but I didn't feel a thing.

Some magic or technology made the space inside the car impervious to acceleration. That alone was a miracle other planets and races would pay dearly to learn. No wonder the Accord and the Hegemony lusted after this dead civilization's secrets. I relaxed and waited for the train to break down.

Okay, it wasn't going to break down, but it *was* going to make an unscheduled stop due to a subtle bit of sabotage. I don't know how Tarenia arranged it, but when it happened, I had to move.

I'd been riding for some hours, through four stops with passengers coming and going, when my moment finally came. The train's illumination dimmed, then the car jerked, slowed, and stopped. The passengers grumbled epithets in a hundred different languages. While they vented, I fished a tiny black pearl from my pocket and dropped it. When it hit the floor, a sphere of impenetrable darkness enveloped the space around me and the door.

I worked fast.

The panel concealing the door controls yielded like a blushing bride to the tools in my clockwork fingertips. Inside, I flicked the tiny lever that released the locking mechanism. The door slid open, and I stepped out into the light.

My hair frizzed as I fell like a feather past the energized rail of the train and landed on the broken scree of the rail bed, crouching behind one of the supports. Within moments, the train above me surged back into motion, racing off like a bolt from a crossbow. Hopefully nobody would even notice I'd left.

I was alone in the dead vaults of Kylorn.

Dark, cold, and hopefully lifeless, the rail tunnel fell into an eerie silence as the train car vanished in the distance. My clockwork eye penetrated the gloom, and as long as the temperature didn't drop to the point where my lubricant or blood froze, the cold didn't bother me. Lifeless was good. It meant there wasn't anything hungry that thought a few machine bits and bobs in its otherwise meaty diet would be a good source of roughage.

I retrieved the map from my hidden cache and got my bearings, then started out at an easy jog.

Just where the map said it would be, a second rail crossed



beneath the one my train had traveled, but this one wasn't part of the functioning network. I climbed down and continued. About an hour and five miles later, I found another crossing, but instead of one dead rail, there were more than a dozen.

The Hub.

I found the large metal door in the tunnel wall Tarenia had circled in red ink on my map. The portal—an impressive network of gears, pistons, and toothed racks—would have admitted a rail car.

Time for the first phase of negotiations.

The door was quite a piece of work, and would have foiled a master burglar. Fortunately, I'd been told how to tickle its tumblers. I had to wind three different springs in a particular sequence, then a series of catches thrown in another sequence. The result warmed the gears of my heart. Teeth engaged, gears spun, and a resonant click sounded from within. Shiny metal pistons receded from the iron frame into the door, and hinges that hadn't rotated in a millennium did so now without a sound or complaint of corrosion or fatigue.

Nice workmanship...

As I strode through, I heard a click of stone on stone from the empty tunnels behind me. I looked back, but saw nothing. Maybe I'd overturned a pebble or two, and they were just settling with the vibration of a distant train.

Maybe...

I slipped to the side of the portal and waited, listening. Who knew what opening the door might have triggered or awakened?

Paranoid? Me? Do clocks tick?

Silence...

Back to my task, I strode into the disused maintenance depot. Mechanical shapes stood in precise rows, hung from silent chains in quiet repose, hundreds of them, all shapes, sizes, forms and functions, waiting to stir again.

"Think of me as your alarm clock," I whispered. Alas, the silent machines remained silent...no appreciation for clockwork humor. Or perhaps they would awaken only to the call of their master. That was who I truly needed to find and rouse. With all the ironmongery in this vast chamber, however, that might prove difficult.

Sometimes I like being wrong.

The end of the chamber narrowed to a recess that I'd first thought might serve as a storage nook for spare parts. Dark metal, gears, pistons, springs, panels, and gleaming crystal and wire had been set into the walls of the recess like a mosaic. But wreathed by that dark network stood a gleaming humanoid shape, its glistening metal skin etched with runes, four articulating arms folded over a narrow chest where an

elongated gem of black crystal rested. Its face was a smooth crystal sphere, dark and dormant.

The master of the depot was asleep.

"Time to wake up," I whispered, pausing to examine the machinery that surrounded the clockwork master. Decoration, or some other mechanism that couldn't be engaged without first waking the master? Who knew?

It only took me a moment to find the winding mechanism. I turned the tiny crank until I felt resistance and stopped. Nothing happened. So long asleep, perhaps it needed a jolt to wake up. In a world without coffee, I could think of only one thing. I pressed my hand to its crystal heart and gave it a fraction of the same surge of power I use to energize my sword.

Runes flared, gears spun, and the crystal ball face swirled with light and color. Two of the four mechanical hands snatched my wrist before I could draw away. My metal arm tingled, and I felt a surge of energy coming back from it, and with that surge, words formed in my mind.

Inquiry: Who?

"Anasya," I said. Honesty seemed wise if I wanted my arm back.

Inquiry: Why?

I assumed it was asking why I'd awakened it. "I wish to speak with you. Your world is alive again after centuries of sleep. The transport system must be reactivated."

Inquiry: How long?

"I don't know. Many centuries."

Its crystalline head tilted quizzically, examining me. *Declarative: You are not of flesh. You are not of machine. Inquiry: What are you?*

"I'm auttaine, which means a bit of both." I looked down at its grip on my wrist, not damaging, but tight. "May I have my hand back?"

Declarative: Imprinting complete. Affirmative. It released me.

I wasn't sure what it meant by imprinting, and was equally unsure I wanted to know. "Thank you." I flexed my metal hand. "You are the master of the transport system?"

Negation: No. Its crystalline face darkened, a swirling cloudy storm. *Declarative: I serve the masters. The world stopped spinning, and their bodies could not adapt. The masters told me to wait. I waited. They did not return.*

"No, they won't return." I took a chance. "You are your own master now. Can you restart the transport system?"

Uncertainty: Insufficient data. It took a step forward and spun its head backward, one arm extending to grasp a green crystal set into the wall behind it. *Initiate: Diagnostic commencing. Working...working...*

Some of the gears and springs in the wall twitched. *An information system?* I decided to let it work and started to turn away, when the clockwork master's voice suddenly rang with urgency.

Warning: Caution! Intruder! The master's crystal head swiveled back to stare at me. Energy crackled in its hands.

I stepped back and raised my hands. "Wait, I—"

Warning: Violence imminent! Evasive action recommended!

I understood an instant too late as I whirled and reached for my sword, but something hit me hard enough to send me flying into half-dozen mothballed mechanoids. I landed in a tangle of metal and bruised meat, but managed to fling my metal arm up to protect my head. Nothing felt broken, but I had a few dents. Only when I looked back where I'd stood did I realize that I had only been in the way.

My assailant looked like a great amorphous blob of weaving, pummeling pseudopods. It gleamed like polished metal, moving like an ooze, but fast. Eyes, claws, hands, and pincers formed in its liquid body. A hetzuud, and the biggest I'd ever seen. The Hegemony elevated the species from barbarism and used them as spies, saboteurs, and assassins due to their ability to assume any shape. It couldn't have followed me, but it might have been lying in wait, unable to access the depot until I arrived.

And now it was trying to destroy the master.

Warning: Defensive measures! As the master's voice rang in my mind, the crystal wand in its chest flared and fire leapt from two of its metal hands. The third and fourth had latched onto the mechanical wall behind it, and the dark gears and panels started to engage and spin.

As I struggled to my feet, the hetzuud giant reeled back from the flames, its mirror skin blackened. Two pseudopods lashed out from opposite sides and the master was caught between them. Metal squealed in protest as the master was torn away from the mechanical wall. The dark machinery fell silent.

Warning: Damage. Repair necessary. Cannot activate defense mechanisms.

The hetzuud dashed the clockwork master hard against the floor with a gut-wrenching clang.

Warning: Damage. Beams of fire lashed out from the master's hands to score burns in its foe, but the hetzuud wouldn't let go. *Warning: Cannot activate defenses. Aid requested.*

I drew my sword, quite sure I had no chance to kill such a monster, but I was more than willing to try. If something didn't kill it, I wasn't likely to get out of here alive. I picked what I hoped was a vulnerable spot and lunged, pumping as much energy as I dared into my sword. Liquid flesh scorched and crackled, and an ungodly howl rose up from several gnashing mouths. A pseudopod lashed out and my feet left the floor again. The mechanical wall didn't yield when I hit it, but something in my head did.

The room reeled around me as I slumped to the floor. Blood or lubricant trickled down the back of my neck. I didn't know if the weakness that invaded my limbs was due to the injury or expending so much energy on my attack, but my legs didn't want to work.

Another horrendous clang echoed through the chamber as the hetzuud bashed the master against the floor again. One metal arm clattered away, its runes extinguished. Another beam of energy lashed out to score a burn in the hetzuud, but the monster flailed on, undaunted.

Warning: Damage. Cannot activate defenses. Arcane runes flared, and motes of energy shot out to blast bloody holes in the hetzuud.

Maybe my brain had taken a hit, but the master's defenses seemed to be working fine.

Appeal: Aid requested. Another clang echoed as metal met stone, and the master's voice in my head sounded weaker. *Appeal: Activate defense mechanism, or destruction imminent.*

I clawed up the mechanical wall to my feet. I had a few tricks left, and cut the drawstrings of a pouch at my hip to fling it at the raging blob. The pouch disgorged a swarm of biting spiders. It wasn't much of an offensive weapon, more of a distraction, but it was the best I had. The irate little arachnids plunged their fangs into the hetzuud's gleaming skin, but the amorphous monster responded by undulating itself right on top of the skittering spiders, squishing them like furry little grapes.

So much for my brilliant counterattack.

Again, the hetzuud bashed the master against the floor.

Appeal: Activate defense mechanism, or destruction imminent! The master cast another spell at its assailant, but the scorching beams of fire didn't dissuade it. Then the voice in my head changed in tone to something I wouldn't have expected from a machine. *Plea: Anasya! Activate the system as you did me! Help me!*

It wanted *me* to activate the depot's defense system? I could try, but I had no idea how, and I had no time to figure it out.

I whirled to examine the complicated wall of clockwork and tried to remember where the master had placed his hands. This was beyond me. The clash and clatter of the conflict behind me didn't help. I found the green crystal the master had grasped, and latched on with my metal hand. I channeled what little energy I had left into the wall of dark machinery.

Gears sprang to life, whirring and clicking, even as I felt the last of my own energy fleeing my sagging limbs. My knees folded as the wall came to life, gears meshing, panels moving, gems and crystals flaring with brilliant light.

As the floor came up to meet the back of my already battered skull, the wall of machinery took on a new form. Sinuous, dark, and deadly, a clockwork dragon reconfigured above me, emerald eyes glowing with ferocity. It lashed out with claws, emerald fire flowing from its beaked maw. My senses gave up their tenuous grasp on consciousness, and the chamber faded into darkness as the hetzuud abandoned the master and surged toward the dragon.

My sarcastic ghost laughed in my mind as oblivion claimed me.

Declarative: Hemostasis achieved. Hydraulics stable. Lubricant level nominal...

The voice in my head was back. It hurt to think, but at least I could. I blinked my eyes open and squinted into the glaring light above me.

Assessment: Central processing reinitialized. Cognizance restored. A swirling sphere of luminous colors hove into my view, and I sensed relief in those soothing hues. *Inquiry:

How are you feeling, Anasya?*

Stupid question. "I'm fine," I lied.

I felt like I'd been chewed up and spat out, and the noise of clattering machinery rang through my head like a cavalry charge. Four clockwork workers near the table nodded as if satisfied with their handiwork, and turned away to join their brethren—dozens, no *hundreds* of mechanical forms all working on one thing or another. Gears moved, springs twitched, everything alive and moving in an intricate mechanical ballet.

Assertion: You were badly damaged. The master of the depot helped me off the stone table on which I lay, and the room spun a bit. *Explanation: I initiated repairs to your systems. I hope you don't mind the intrusion.*

Its voice sounded different, less artificial. "I don't mind." I took stock and noted that everything worked, the fleshy bits as well as the mechanical ones. The back of my head ached, but the wound was closed. "Thank you."

Assertion: Your repairs were essential. I could not let you be destroyed after you saved me. That would have been... the crystal ball head tilted, the cloudy colors swirling. *...ungracious.*

I don't know why, but it brought a smile to my lips. "Looks like you got the place up and running." I looked around, but there was no sign of the hetzuud.

Acknowledgement: Thanks to you, Anasya. The master gestured at the gaping portal to the railway hub outside and the dark draconic figure stationed there. *Declarative: The depot's defenses are active. We will have no more problems with intruders."

"Good." I had no doubt the Hegemony would try other tactics to further their ends on Kylorn, but a functional transport system would herald trade to all corners of the world—the lifeblood of civilization. My work here was done. "I guess I should go."

Uncertainty: Go?

The master's head tilted again, the swirling colors darkening. *Inquiry: Where?*

"Home, my friend." I smiled at the master and extended my metal hand. "I've accomplished what I came to do. My mission's over."

Assurance: You needn't go if you wish to stay, Anasya. The master took my hand and shook it in a very human gesture. *Declarative: You will always have a home here, if you need one.*

"Thank you." The thought made me feel strange. No humanoid had ever made such a warm and welcoming offer to me. "I may come to visit. Kylorn is an old world newly discovered, and there are endless opportunities for trade." That thought and my aching head brought another question to mind. "You wouldn't have any coffee, would you?"

Inquiry: Coffee?

The master's head tilted again. *Declarative: I am unfamiliar with that element, Anasya.*

"I didn't think so." *Trade opportunities indeed...* "Fair well, my friend." I smiled and started for the door. I had a long walk home, unless I could hop a rail car.

"Right." I closed my corset and adjusted my duster. "I've been told Zel-Argose is a dangerous place."

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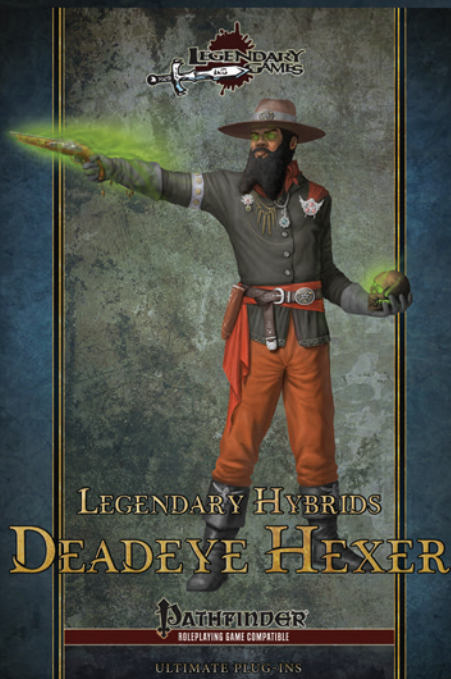


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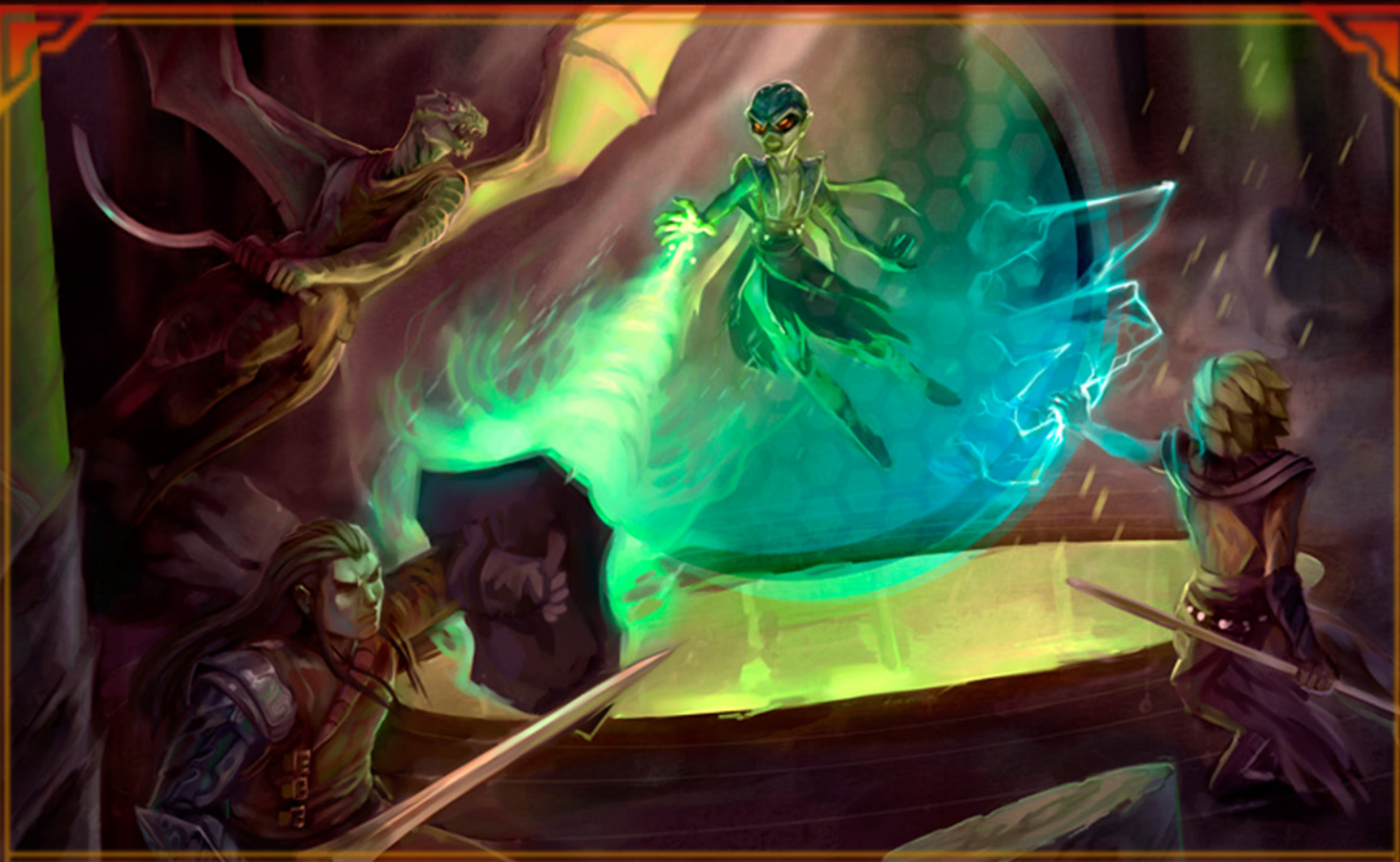


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