

# STARFINDER



## SIGNAL OF SCREAMS

## HEART OF NIGHT

BY SAIF ANSARI





## VELSTRAC TORMENTOR

## TIER 9

Medium transport

**Speed** 8; **Maneuverability** average (turn 2); **Drift** 1

**AC** 27; **TL** 26

**HP** 100; **DT** —; **CT** 20

**Shields** medium 120 (forward 30, port 30, starboard 30, aft 30)

**Attack (Forward)** heavy laser cannon (4d8), *summoning torpedo launcher* (3d10 plus special)

**Attack (Aft)** light plasma cannon (2d12)

**Attack (Turret)** linked light plasma cannons (4d12)

**Power Core** Arcus Maximum (200 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Basic; **Systems** basic long-range sensors, crew quarters (common), mk 3 duonode computer, mk 8 armor, mk 8 defenses; **Expansion Bays** arcane laboratory, brig (*Starfinder* Act Worlds 153), life science lab, medical bay, tech workshop

**Modifier** +3 any two checks per round, +2 Computers (sensors only); **Complement** 5 (minimum 1, maximum 6)

### CREW

**Captain** Bluff +17 (9 ranks), Computers +14 (9 ranks), Engineering +14 (9 ranks), gunnery +13, Intimidate +17 (9 ranks), Piloting +14 (9 ranks)

**Engineer** Engineering +17 (9 ranks)

**Gunners** gunnery +15

**Pilot** Computers +15 (9 ranks), gunnery +14, Piloting +17 (9 ranks)

**Science Officer** Computers +17 (9 ranks)

### SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

**Summoning Torpedo Launcher** Some velstrac starships are armed with hybrid torpedo launchers that can cause terror and havoc on enemy ships.

A *summoning torpedo launcher* is a heavy tracking weapon with long range, a speed of 12 hexes, and the limited field of effect special property. Once per starship combat, when a *summoning torpedo* deals Hull Point damage to an enemy vessel, it can be triggered to call forth a corporeal horror on board that vessel that plays on its crew's fears (see page 14). This weapon is available only for velstrac starships.

Built from cold, dark metals found exclusively on the Shadow Plane, velstrac Tormentors are mobile bases of operations providing their crews with all the resources necessary for experimentation and torture of any creatures that cross their paths. Any other ship outfitted this way could be mistaken for an emergency vessel, but one look inside the Tormentor's medical bay or life science lab is enough to reveal its intended purpose.

Manacles, chains, and custom restraints line the corridors, while more hang overhead, stowed away for later use. The ship's systems function mechanically, but the interfaces are masochistic and painful to use, often requiring crew to sit in chairs that resemble torture instruments or to deliberately insert their hands into razor-lined gauntlets in order to interact with controls. Heavily armored and bristling with weapons intended to wreak havoc on enemies, the Tormentor makes an impression when it appears; its winged exterior spreads wide, like a barb launched from a titanic weapon, and it trails long, hooked chains that chase after it like tendrils behind a jellyfish.



# STARFINDER

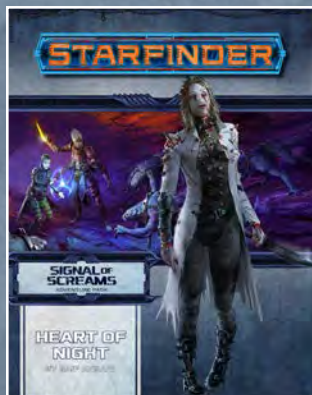
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## ON THE COVER



We finally get a good look at the sinister Dr. Lestana Gragant in this gruesome illustration by artist Ignacio Bazán Lazcano.



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## CONTENT WARNING

The Signal of Screams Adventure Path contains typical Starfinder action and adventure, but be warned that it also presents scenarios in which horrifying things happen to the PCs and the NPCs around them. The events presented in this Adventure Path fall into the realm of body horror and psychological horror, which can include disfigurement, mutation, parasitism and disease, self-mutilation, injury, and the aftermath of such unpleasantness. Before you begin, understand that player consent (including that of the GM) is the most important thing to consider. GMs should talk with their players about the horror elements included and obtain everyone's consent to the inclusion of these topics. It's also a good idea to include a method for players to indicate whether the game's content has gone too far during play. More instruction about running horror campaigns responsibly and ensuring that all players have fun is included in the article "Horror Campaigns" in *Starfinder Adventure Path #10: The Diaspora Strain*.

This book refers to several other Starfinder products using the following abbreviations, yet these additional supplements are not required to make use of this book. Readers interested in references to Starfinder hardcovers can find the complete rules of these books available online for free at [sfrd.info](http://sfrd.info).

Alien Archive	AA
Alien Archive 2	AA2
Armory	AR



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Printed in China. To light a candle is to cast a shadow.





# HEART OF NIGHT

## PART 1: THE SHADOW OF VERCES 3

Stranded on the Shadow Plane, the PCs must work with worshippers of Zon-Kuthon to retrieve a version of their starship.

## PART 2: STARLESS SKIES 13

To reach the shadow version of New Elysium, the PCs must fight velstrac raiders and navigate the chambers of a massive structure shaped like a human heart.

## PART 3: TERMINAL FREQUENCY 24

The PCs explore the memories of Dr. Gragant brought to life to finally confront the twisted scientist and put an end to her schemes.

## ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Heart of Night" is designed for four characters.

11

The PCs begin this adventure at 11th level.

12

The PCs should reach 12th level while they are exploring the Heartgate.

13

The PCs should be 13th level by the end of the adventure.



## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Some stories are tales of grand moves in an endless game of strategy between players of unfathomable power. Others are simple tragedies sparked by everyday trauma. The history of Dr. Lestana Gragant falls into the latter category. As a teenager, Lestana saw her parents suffer unbearable agony in the final months of their lives, each claimed by a different malady incurable by science or magic. The experience planted a noble if flawed ambition in the young woman: to eliminate all pain.

This goal eventually led Lestana Gragant down a dark and twisted path. After she spent her early career performing medical research without producing practical applications, her financing dried up. But before she could declare her life's work a failure, she was approached by a corporation called Eclipse Innovations, which was looking for new ways to withstand the attacks of the Swarm. Eclipse set up a facility for Dr. Gragant in a remote asteroid in the Diaspora that was the site of a former mining operation, tasking her with creating a method to immunize soldiers against pain.

As the years passed, Dr. Gragant made no further progress, and as pressure from Eclipse's board of directors mounted, she began to grow desperate. She turned to mysticism as her experiments slid into amorality. She and her team performed unspeakable atrocities—torture, vivisection, and prolonged death—on unwilling subjects, all in search of an elusive answer.

One day while in a melancholy humor, Dr. Gragant devised a thought experiment: Instead of blocking or eliminating pain, what if it could be transformed into another experience? If pain could become something the body craved rather than feared—pain perceived as pleasure—such a procedure would serve the same purpose as an inoculation. Dr. Gragant threw herself into this new avenue of research, using some of the arcane techniques she had recently learned. She was certain she was on the right track, but Eclipse's patience had grown thin and the corporation threatened to shut down the project if it didn't produce concrete results. Dr. Gragant's understanding of sensory transformation and the magical techniques involved were still in their infancy, but the fear of failure had soaked into her consciousness, driving her to recklessly test her theories on the subject she knew best: her own body. The procedure failed catastrophically and tore a rift in reality, transforming Dr. Gragant into a terrible fiend and trapping her on the Shadow Plane while killing everyone else on the asteroid.

As far as Eclipse Innovations knew, a massive explosion in Dr. Gragant's facility resulted merely in a devastating loss of life. The corporation shuttered the project and moved on, but Dr. Gragant continued her experiments on the Shadow

Plane for the next 13 years. She continued to alter her own physiology, which she soon discovered was connected to a mote of shadow energy. She also attracted the attention of several Shadow Plane denizens, including a few velstracs, who helped her learn to blend pain and pleasure until she could no longer tell the difference.

In addition, she fostered her connection to the shadow mote, which allowed her to sense and affect living creatures at nearby locations on the Material Plane. Using her knowledge of engineering, she crafted a machine around the mote to amplify this power. Similar to a subauditory signal, the psychic energy the mote projected onto the Material Plane could subtly affect the portions of a subject's brain that experience pain and pleasure, warping these sensations until the victim experiences unreasonable urges to inflict pain on themselves and others.

Over the years, Dr. Gragant affected multiple Material Plane victims with her shadow signal, all the while refining her techniques and continuing her experiments. She came to believe that she had solved the question that plagued her all her life, and that it was her duty to share the answer with the galaxy. Her crusade began when a company built a luxury resort on the asteroid that used to hold her research facility. Eventually, she warped the mind of a visiting Eclipse Innovations executive named Kaeon Rhyse, making him her most loyal acolyte. The two worked to take over the corporation and set up the first test of Dr. Gragant's shadow signal on a wider basis: the corruption of all the resort's guests and staff at once.

Though the PCs escaped New Elysium, Dr. Gragant felt the test was a success. The same PCs thwarted a similar procedure using Eclipse's Penumbra app on Verces, where they also put an end to Kaeon Rhyse, but Dr. Gragant doesn't give up easily. She is already plotting other means of bringing her message of pain as pleasure to the galaxy. Unless she is stopped, she will eventually succeed, bringing freedom from pain in the form of an exquisite, masochistic ascension for all living creatures.

## PART 1: THE SHADOW OF VERCES

At the end of the previous adventure, the PCs should have taken down Kaeon Rhyse at the Eclipse Innovations black site on Verces's Darkside and learned that Dr. Lestana Gragant, the creator of the corrupting signal, is trapped in the Shadow Plane version of New Elysium. In returning to Cuvacara, the PCs likely realized that they too are now stranded on the Shadow Plane.

While on the Shadow Plane, the PCs cannot communicate with any allies or associates on the Material Plane (if they have any), and any attempt to pass back to the Material Plane

## SIGNAL OF SCREAMS

### HEART OF NIGHT

### PART 1: THE SHADOW OF VERCES

### PART 2: STARLESS SKIES

### PART 3: TERMINAL FREQUENCY

### CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

### THE SHADOW PLANE

### ALIEN ARCHIVES

### CODEx OF WORLDS



fails due to their shadow corruption. A PC who succeeds at a DC 26 Mysticism check realizes they are bound to the Shadow Plane with no obvious way to return to the Material Plane or purge themselves of the shadow corruption. The PCs most likely want to pay a visit to Dr. Gragant in order to get answers, but to do that, they need to find a starship in order to return to the Diaspora. The Shadow Plane counterpart of the Cuvacaran spaceport will probably be the first place the PCs look for one.

For more information about the planar traits of the Shadow Plane, see "The Shadow Plane" on page 44.

### THE KAYAL ENCLAVE

The Shadow Plane lacks color, but its close approximation of the Material Plane makes the differences all the more stark. Wandering through the shadow version of Cuvacara should be melancholy and disorienting. It is eerie, quiet, and illuminated by a dim ambient light that does more to deepen the shadows than to illuminate any open spaces. Tall buildings throw dark, long shadows as black as the Abyss, and other strange shadows seem to move between the many pools of darkness with no apparent physical object to define their source. Distant whispers of an indeterminate language hang in the air.

The bullet trains that normally traverse the city are silent and unmoving, making it difficult to reach the Cuvacaran spaceport, but from the shore, the PCs can see no vessels approaching or leaving the area. In fact, the landing pads and hangars appear to be completely bereft of starships. However, there seem to be signs of life nearby in the private residential district known in Cuvacara as the Gloaming.

What seemed to be writhing columns of shadows turn out to be tendrils of smoke rising between the dark houses of the Gloaming. Approaching that area, the PCs first arrive in one of the neighborhood's open parks, though much of the greenery is gray and stunted. Several humanoid figures in dark cloaks move through the central area, while several small generators smoke as they provide power to many of the nearby luxurious houses and a handful of lights that attempt to illuminate the area.

These kayals are attempting to eke out an existence here after many of their kind living in the city entered into a deal with Kaeon Rhyse and Eclipse Innovations, offering to work Dr. Gragant's will on Shadow Verces in exchange for her blessings and protection, should her plans come to fruition.

The less morally bankrupt kayals have established a camp in the Gloaming while fighting a silent war against their former companions.

Unless the PCs make extreme attempts to be stealthy (such as by being invisible), a pair of kayal guards soon spots them and demands to know their business, weapons drawn. If the PCs are stealthy, watch over the settlement for at least an hour, and succeed at a DC 24 Sense Motive check, they can tell that the kayals are paranoid but peaceful beings just trying to survive, and that they might know more information about the PCs' predicament. If the PCs make themselves known, the kayal guards issue the same demand.

If the PCs are honest about their intentions and one of them succeeds at a DC 27 Diplomacy check, the guards lower their weapons and allow the PCs to enter the enclave. The PCs can see that several of the kayals bear recent wounds and that the mood is quite poor.

A somber vendor named **Hanmu** (N male kayal) is willing to trade with the PCs, offering a small selection of level-appropriate gear from the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*. He pays in UPBs instead of credits for anything the PCs want to sell to him, though he does accept credits

for anything the PCs buy. In response to any questions, the guards and Hanmu suggest the PCs speak with the community's leader, Veyla.

If the PCs fail this Diplomacy check, the guards keep their weapons trained on the PCs and send a runner to fetch to Veyla, who arrives shortly to interrogate the PCs.

**Veyla** (LN female kayal) dresses in unadorned armor, with white hair pulled into a snug bun and long, spindly limbs that move similar to a spider's legs. Her eyes are yellow pools without irises, and her white skin seems to almost glow with a green luminescence. She sees the PCs as potential tools but remains wary of them due to their shadow corruption. Veyla puts the interests of her people first, however, and she will negotiate or deal with anyone to ensure their safety. She is not amoral; rather, she sees herself as a pragmatist doing whatever is necessary for the continued existence of her community.

Veyla has an initial attitude of indifferent to the PCs, but she can be made friendly with a successful DC 27 Diplomacy check. If the PCs mention working against Eclipse Innovations in their initial explanation of who they are and what they are doing on the Shadow Plane, they gain a +4 circumstance bonus to this Diplomacy check. If Veyla's attitude is made friendly or helpful, she will answer the PCs' questions. The following are some topics of conversation, along with Veyla's responses.





### Who are you? Do you know about the Material Plane?

"We are kayals. Our ancestors were humans from the Material Plane who fled to the Shadow Plane millennia ago, and we have since adapted to this plane and spread throughout the galaxy. Travelers from your plane sometimes find their way here, and we aid them as best we can... Or we used to, at least. You are welcome to remain here as long as you trade fairly and without violence."

### Can you help us return to the Material Plane?

"Unfortunately, I am unaware of any nearby planar portals. Our community used to be in contact with a Material Plane corporation named Eclipse Innovations for a little over a year, trading information and occasionally goods, but the influence of those foul vultures turned our own people against us." If the PCs mention their travels to the Eclipse black site, Veyla continues, "And from your stories, I suppose any connection Eclipse had to the Shadow Plane has since been destroyed."

**Can we get off this planet?** "Yes, with a starship, you can go pretty much wherever you like. Distances are... different here on the Shadow Plane. What might be a several-day journey on foot on the Material Plane takes only a few hours here. I am told the same is true for trips between planets." Veyla sighs. "However, the majority of starship travel to and from Shadow Verces is regulated by the cultists of Zon-Kuthon who control Skydock." A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Culture check knows about Skydock, a massive space platform anchored in Verces' Ring of Nations that dates back to long before the Gap. If no PC succeeds at this check, Veyla can tell them about Skydock. "I have not dealt much with the Skydock Kuthites, but I know that though they are religious fanatics, they aren't... unreasonable."

**Your people look injured and dispirited. What's going on?** "A group of kayals who used to be our neighbors and cousins were... enticed by promises of wealth and power from Eclipse Innovations, who seemed to be doing something sinister on Darkside. They have declared us to be weak and are threatening to destroy us. They have even recruited a few of the more aggressive Shadow Plane natives to their side. However, Cuvacara is our home, and we know its ways. We have retreated to this section of the city and have suffered losses, but I have resisted calls to leave completely. The journey to another city would be perilous, with no guarantee of safety wherever we might go. But if the attacks continue, I might have no choice."

Veyla hasn't heard the names "New Elysium" or "Dr. Lestana Gragant," though she has heard whispers of a shadow queen from those kayals who sold out to Eclipse Innovations. She assumed it was a ploy by Eclipse to get the Cuvacaran kayals on their side. After speaking with Veyla, the PCs can trade with Hanmu (as noted on page 4) and rest for the night. The kayals don't charge them for a room in one of the many houses nearby, but they do ask them to pay for food (at the standard rates).

**Story Award:** If the PCs successfully changed Veyla's attitude to friendly or better, award them 6,400 XP.

## EVENT 1: A LONG SHADOW (CR 13)

At some point while the PCs are resting, just before they are about to retire for the night or when they're about to leave the kayal enclave, read or paraphrase the following.

A bellow cuts through the stillness of the dim city. "Weaklings!" The unknown voice shouts. "Time for a lesson in pain!" The enclave erupts in chaos and sounds of distress as a large figure comes into view between the buildings. A massive spiked chain slams into a fleeing kayal, knocking her to the ground and tearing strips of flesh from her back. The intruder, dressed in slate-gray armor edged with blood-red accents, strides into the park, swinging the chain at anyone in reach.

**Creature:** A shadow giant—a cruel native of the Shadow Plane—allied with the kayals in Eclipse's employ has hunted down Veyla's enclave. He intends to kill them all. If the PCs don't seem interested in engaging the shadow giant, Veyla begs them for assistance before she is knocked unconscious by a swipe of the shadow giant's chains.

### SHADOW GIANT

CR 13

XP 25,600

HP 227 (see page 56)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The shadow giant lashes out with his shadow chains at any PC who dares get close to him. If he is somehow disarmed of his melee weapon, the shadow giant draws his rifle or hurls debris ripped from the nearby houses.

**Morale** Abandoning his task would besmirch the shadow giant's reputation, so he fights to the death.

**Development:** Once the giant is defeated, the kayals calm down and begin to salvage their community, aid the injured, and dispose of their dead. Veyla, bloodied and bandaged, takes the PCs aside to thank them for their help. Read or paraphrase the following.

"This giant has been hounding my people for months," Veyla says. "Thanks to you, he will bother us no more. I am sorry we can't help you any further, though you are still welcome to rest here and recover from your wounds or trade with our merchants, if you wish. But I think we can't stay here much longer. I think we will have to find another place to live, perhaps within Fullbright. As desolate as it is, the other kayals will likely not harass us there. Perhaps, in time, after realizing their patrons at Eclipse are gone, they will be willing to treat peacefully with us and our lives can return to normal."

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THE CAMPAIGN

THE SHADOW  
PLANE

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If the PCs made Veyla friendly earlier, she gives the PCs a gift as thanks.

After hesitating for a second, Veyla draws a weapon from within her cloak, weighing it heavily in her hand before passing it over. "I do not have much to offer, but this is a weapon my mother and her mother before her used to keep our clan safe from the monsters that prowl the shadows. I prefer my pistols these days and have no more use for this. Perhaps it will serve you better than it has me."

After Veyla hands over the weapon—an evil outsider-bane ultrathin dagger—she departs to begin the process of leading her community's efforts to salvage any portable equipment, pack up their wounded, and depart for a new location.

## JOURNEY IN THE DARK

Shadow Skydock is only 2 days' journey from Shadow Cuvacara, which is far less time than it would take to walk between those two locations on the Material Plane. An almost overbearing pall of darkness hangs over the countryside, becoming pitch black if the PCs stray too close to the planet's Darkside. Even Fullbright seems dim and overcast from their vantage point.

Veyla can point them in a generally northern direction if needed, and after a few hours, the PCs begin to see Skydock on the horizon, an ominous tower vanishing into the dark sky, radiating waves of shadow like the shimmer of heat. A PC can attempt a DC 22 Survival check to not get lost with the Skydock in sight. A PC who succeeds at a DC 27 Perception check notices that there is a strange absence of traffic approaching or leaving the Skydock, which is unusual both for the Material Plane Skydock and for its Shadow Plane equivalent described by Veyla.

## EVENT 2: RETALIATION (CR 11)

At the end of their first day of travel, the PCs will need to make camp. While no place on Shadow Verces feels particularly safe, the PCs can easily find a clearing to set up tents or lay down sleeping bags (or just stretch out under the dark sky). A PC who succeeds at a DC 32 Survival check can find a more secluded locale, such as against a low rise or under a shelf of sheltering rock. This grants the PCs a +4 circumstance bonus to Perception checks to notice the encroaching kayal assassins (see Creatures below).

**Creatures:** While the PCs fought the shadow giant at the kayal enclave, they were being watched from afar by the kayals allied with Eclipse. As an attempt to take revenge

for killing their shadow giant enforcer, four kayal assassins strike against the PCs during a moment of weakness. The kayal assassins attempt Stealth checks opposed by the Perception checks of any PCs who are on watch to get close enough to the party to engage them in melee. Wearing sleek, dark armor and wielding weapons provided by Eclipse Innovations several months ago, these kayals try to complete their mission of murder quickly and quietly.

### KAVALS (4)

CR 7

XP 3,200 each

HP 100 each (see page 57)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The kayals use trick attack every round to deal the most damage to their targets. If the PCs seem to be competent melee fighters, two of the kayals pull back to fire their pistols.

**Morale** If two or more of the kayals are reduced to fewer than half their Hit Points or at least two of the kayals fall, the assassins attempt to retreat into the darkness. These kayals accept defeat and don't harass the PCs any further.

**Development:** If the PCs capture any of these kayals, the prisoners don't say much. However, a PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Diplomacy or Intimidate check can get at least one kayal to talk. The kayal prisoner explains her relationship to Kaeon Rhyse and Eclipse Innovations, noting that they aren't the only Shadow Plane residents the corporation had recruited lately (the PCs have already met at least one of them: Avigdis the svartalfar). The kayal says that Kaeon paid them to secure as much as Shadow Cuvacara as possible in preparation for a massive power play by the verthani's boss, whom the kayal knows only as "Dr. Gragant." These kayals are unaware of the shadow signal or its effects on people, and they certainly can't tell the PCs anything about their shadow corruption—they are simply guns for hire.

## ARRIVING AT SHADOW SKYDOCK

With the assassins defeated or run off, the PCs can continue on to Shadow Skydock with no other incidents.

Over the years, a collection of buildings has been built around the base of Skydock, providing amenities and lodging for arriving visitors, as well as housing for those who work on the space platform. Approaching Shadow Skydock through the reflection of this makeshift city is eerie, as, like Shadow Cuvacara, it seems almost entirely devoid of life. A giant structure coated in vibrating darkness rises above it





all, its thrumming radiation filling the air with a rustling, dry wind that does little to ease the palpable tension.

Due to ancient technology—built when the humans of Golarion were struggling to master iron and steel but verthani soared among the stars in elaborate aethershops—whenever a starship lands on the Material Plane version of Verces, the computers of Shadow Skydock scan the vessel through thin spots in the planar barrier and record its schematics in a vast database. Skilled engineers (first consisting of those who programmed the computers here and later the kayal workers of today) can then craft a copy of such a vessel out of shadowstuff, which they usually sell to those who need to travel through Shadow Plane space. Shadow Skydock is currently controlled by a large contingent of worshippers of Zon-Kuthon and has been for several years. Their leader is **Father Gloom** (LE male kayal mechanic/mystic).

A gifted engineer and a priest in service to Zon-Kuthon, Father Gloom runs Shadow Skydock with a deft hand and acute business acumen. He doesn't worry about where his clients' payments come from so long as no one tries to cheat him. On the rare occasion that someone tries to swindle him, Father Gloom doesn't pursue violence against the offending party. He instead bides his time and prepares a methodical revenge, springing it when the cheat has likely forgotten about the incident. This nonconfrontational attitude extends to other aspects of his life, steering him to favor diplomacy over bloodshed.

The majority of Shadow Skydock's workers also follow Zon-Kuthon, considering the chance to work with such rare and unusual materials a gift from their god. When business is slow, the engineers craft devices of exquisite pain and undergo rituals of self-modification and self-mutilation. Such services are also offered to customers, though only few ever take them up on it. Nevertheless, Shadow Skydock doesn't hurt for business.

All of that changed several days ago when Kaeon Rhyse shunted the Eclipse black site onto the Shadow Plane, which took an incredible amount of planar energy. Herembour, one of Father Gloom's acolytes, was undergoing his nightly communions with Zon-Kuthon at the same time, and the surge of power afflicted him with a unique echo of the shadow signal. It mutated within his heavily augmented body and spread into Shadow Skydock's computer systems, eventually becoming a system-wide infection. As Shadow Skydock's mechanical systems began to turn against their operators, Father Gloom called for a retreat to the space elevator's ground floors. His divinations are of little use, and all attempts to access remote camera feeds show only images of hideous violence perpetrated on those who were left behind, mutilated kayals left dead or dying. Lacking the security resources to retake Shadow Skydock, Father Gloom is looking for someone to deal with the traitorous acolyte so he can return to business.

As the PCs approach the central district near the base of Shadow Skydock, read or paraphrase the following.

The towering structure is enveloped in layers of shimmering shadow, as if wreathed in untold volumes of smoke. A few humanoid creatures roam the streets around it in an erratic, listless patrol. From a nearby building, a small figure emerges, holding up his hands in a gesture of peace.

His glowing yellow eyes and skin the color of storm clouds are enough to mark him as a kayal. Entirely bald, he bears a number of ritual scars, tattoos, and dozens of piercings in symmetrical design across his head. The markings continue down his neck and disappear under his clothes, emerging from his sleeves to extend to the tips of his fingers. Flat studs pierce the backs of his arms in what seem to be agonizing inch-wide, bone-deep piercings, and bits of metal seem to have been forced under the nails of his left hand, giving him wicked, painful-looking claws. He's dressed in ordinary, oil-stained mechanic's overalls, and various tools hang from his belt. When he talks, his split tongue and chipped teeth move eerily, belying the sweetness of his voice.

"Ah, some well-armed travelers!" he says. "Praise the Midnight Lord! My name is Father Gloom, and Shadow Skydock is run by me and mine. Well, it was until recently. One of my former acolytes turned on us, infected the machines with some kind of virus, and has claimed the place for his own. It all happened so suddenly, we barely got out with our lives. Looking at you, I am sure Zon-Kuthon sent you to help us deal with our little problem. Shadow Skydock has tremendous resources, and I'm sure we can come to some agreement about what we can do for you, hm?"

Despite his unsettling appearance, Father Gloom is friendly, hoping that the PCs will be able to aid him. If the PCs have questions for him, he is willing to answer them before he shows the group a way to reach his corrupted acolyte. Below are some likely questions the PCs have, along with Father Gloom's responses.

**Who are you? What is this place?** "I'm Father Gloom, head engineer of Shadow Skydock. Though it might seem merely a reflection of Verces's famed space elevator, Shadow Skydock is not unimportant. Our computers scan all the starships that land on Verces, enabling us to create shadow copies... for a price, of course. But don't worry—the process leaves the original ship as it is. We simply make a simulacrum of it here in the Shadow Plane."

**What's going on here?** "Several days ago, we picked up a surge of planar energy from Darkside to the southeast. This caused one of my acolytes, Herembour, who was already prone to experimenting with the darker aspects of our religion, to lose his grip on reality. I have seen similar incidents before, and eventually the victims do fatal harm to themselves, but Herembour somehow transferred this corruption to Shadow Skydock's mechanical devices and turned the whole place into a meat grinder. Oh, such suffering I witnessed—hydraulics

## SIGNAL OF SCREAMS

### HEART OF NIGHT

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### PART 2: STARLESS SKIES

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puncturing torsos, torque threads ripping limbs from bodies, fuel injectors ballooning flesh until it ruptures—but one doesn't like to see his life's work ruined. Hopefully you can help."

**What can we do?** "Surely you are no strangers to violence! Though nearly all of our manufacturing facilities are dangerous to pass through, we know that Herembour has retreated to a specific hangar connected to a maintenance shaft untouched by the rogue machinery. My mechanics are no match for Herembour in his current state, so we have been praying for aid. And here you are!"

**Can you make a copy of our ship?** Father Gloom checks his comm unit. "Yes, we have the schematics on file. An impressive vessel! Unfortunately, with our facilities in such turmoil, we can't help you. Perhaps if you help us, I can even throw in a few upgrades, hm?"

**Can you tell us anything about our corruption?** "I thought I felt something interesting about you." Father Gloom hovers around the PCs for a few moments, his brow furrowed in concentration. "I sense a distinctly velstrac flavor, but there's something off about it. It isn't purely spiritual—there's a mechanical taste to it, as if there's a metal hook buried in your flesh somewhere keeping it in place, hm? Someone's tampering with some fundamental forces. Very fascinating. I'd be glad to cut you open and look about inside, if you like. Oh, it wouldn't kill you; I'm quite skilled at vivisection. None of my patients die unless I want them to." Father Gloom gives a crooked grin.

**Can you get rid of it?** "That isn't how that usually works. However, if you follow the chain attached to that hook inside you to the source and destroy it, then you might have a fighting chance"

**What does all this have to do with Zon-Kuthon?** "Nothing, really. Our religion is our own, with no relation to Shadow Skydock's business. I don't require any sort of conversion from anyone. The Midnight Lord wants only passionate devotees who find their own ways to the worship of pain. Though if you're interested, I'll be happy to introduce you to some introductory meditations."

A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Mysticism check or a DC 25 Culture check can recall the basics about Zon-Kuthon, the lawful evil god of darkness, envy, loss, and pain (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 492). A PC who already worships Zon-Kuthon succeeds at this check automatically. Such PCs also know that while Zon-Kuthon (and most of his followers) are evil, they tend to keep their word on most matters and usually aren't wanton killers. The rituals of pain and mutilation performed by followers of the Midnight Lord are generally performed on willing participants.

## HELPING THE KUTHITES

If the PCs agree to help Father Gloom, he leads them into Shadow Skydock. The platform hangs in a starless sky, eerily silent and still above the tidally locked planet. The sun is a dull gray orb in the far distance, only its corona occasionally

flashing a weak, pale color. Handfuls of injured people, mostly kayals but with a few other humanoids mixed in, crowd among the buildings at the space elevator's base. These people sit around containers turned into makeshift tables, fiddling with spare equipment or cleaning a few, meager weapons intended more for self-defense than launching an attack. Most appear to be in mechanical overalls or other practical outfits, with a few travelers clad in more exotic gear, and are pacing the area nervously.

Those with only minor injuries tend to machinery seemingly patched into the strange substance forming the space station's shadowy sheath. The more seriously wounded are laid out on the ground, tended by various medics of the Kuthite faith. They all barely notice the PCs and Father Gloom as the group passes by.

Eventually, Father Gloom and the PCs come to a nondescript elevator door. The kayal mystic points out that this service elevator remains untouched by the corruption and will take the PCs to a service shaft that leads to Herembour's hangar. He gives them a security code to access that shaft, explaining that it will open into a storage room in the hangar. As the doors close on the PCs, Father Gloom says, "Herembour is unlikely to be alone, as he has bent many of our most dangerous machines to his will. May you play a symphony of pain upon the heretic's flesh"

As the elevator rises, the PCs can catch occasional glimpses of the planet below, possibly engendering moments of nausea and vertigo even though the surface is nearly lost in shadow. The pull of gravity begins to lessen and the air becomes thinner. After nearly an hour, the PCs reach the lower levels of Shadow Skydock, a cluster of workshops and hangars. Father Gloom's directions lead the PCs to a claustrophobic maintenance tunnel. The code he gave to the PCs opens this dim corridor that looks ready to diminish any illumination to a pathetic glow waiting to gutter and die. The PCs walk down the cramped tunnel for several minutes, and just when it seems as though the corridor will stretch on forever, they reach the unsecured hatch in the ceiling above that opens into area **A1**.

## A. SHADOW SKYDOCK HANGAR

This small hangar is one of many around Shadow Skydock used by Father Gloom's engineers and mechanics to repair and upgrade parts of the shadow vessels created in larger shipyards. Herembour was working here when the shadow corruption fully overtook him, so he considers it a holy place of rebirth. He has returned to this area after wreaking destruction across the rest of Shadow Skydock to reflect upon his new form and his future goals.

The hangar is cast in dim light from the flickering, malfunctioning electronics. Due to its location in Shadow Verces' upper atmosphere, it is an area of low gravity. The ceilings in areas **A1** and **A3** are 20 feet high, but the ceiling in area **A2** stretches up to 40 feet in height. The hangar





## A. SHADOW SKYDOCK HANGAR

NORTH  
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

### SIGNAL OF SCREAMS

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doors along the southern wall of area **A2** are blocked with debris but open out directly into the atmosphere, several miles above the planet's surface.

### A1. STORAGE (CR 11)

A number of shelves line the walls of this square room. Various components of computer boards, engine boosters, gyroscopes, shielding panes, and stabilizers lie abandoned on the floor or sit forgotten on the shelves. The clutter is the thickest in the northwest corner of the room, across from a circular hatch in the floor. A wide door exits to the east.

This chamber is one of many storage areas attached to Shadow Skydock's hangars, used to hold remnants of starship systems in case they can be used on other vessels. If left here long enough, most equipment dissolves back into shadowstuff.

**Creature:** A dismantling robot moves about the room, its four limbs moving erratically and stabbing randomly at the junk around it. It occasionally releases small bursts of static and garbled white noise. Its corrupted programming considers all objects as targets for deconstruction, from inert mechanical devices to living beings. The robot fumbles about

for 2 rounds after the PCs enter the room, and then it attacks anyone within reach.

### DECONSTRUCTOR

CR 11

XP 12,800

N Medium construct (technological)

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;

**Perception** +20

### DEFENSE

HP 180

**EAC** 24; **KAC** 26

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

**Defensive Abilities** electrostatic charge; **Immunities** construct immunities

**Weaknesses** vulnerable to critical hits

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** pneumatic claw +24 (4d6+19 P plus grab) or pneumatic hammer +24 (4d6+19 B)

**Offensive Abilities** shattering cone

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The deconstructor tries to grab at a PC with its pneumatic claw to begin the combat. On the second round, it unleashes its shattering cone to catch as many PCs as possible and then returns to using its melee attacks.

**Morale** The deconstructor fights until it is destroyed.



### STATISTICS

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

**Skills** Athletics +20, Computers +20, Engineering +25

**Languages** Common, Shadowtongue (can't speak any language)

**Other Abilities** mindless, unliving

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Electrostatic Charge (Ex)** Any creature that deals damage to the deconstructor with an unarmed strike or melee weapon takes 2d6 electricity damage (Reflex DC 18 half).

**Shattering Cone (Ex)** The deconstructor can emit a cone of sonic energy to break down physical objects once every 1d4 rounds. All creatures and objects in the 15-foot cone take 12d6 sonic damage (Fortitude DC 19 half).

**Treasure:** A PC who spends a few moments searching the shelves and succeeds at a DC 28 Perception check finds an

articulated appendage that can function as a single cybernetic arm augmentation. Father Gloom is happy to install this augmentation on a PC if the group successfully completes their mission.

## A2. HANGAR FLOOR (CR 12)

The hangar floor is a wide, open space with heavy blast doors to the south. A large section of a damaged starship occupies the center of the area, surrounded by portable industrial machinery attached to generators that chug and strain. Long chains—some barbed, others ending with hooks—hang from the ceiling, some wrapped around the machines or simply dangling loosely. The mutilated remains of several people are scattered across the floor, some even draped across the starship section. Blood is everywhere, accompanied by the smell of ozone and gasoline. Doors lead into two self-contained rooms to the east and west.

The bodies here are of Herembour's coworkers, who were butchered before they could flee. A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Medicine check can tell that these unfortunate people were torn apart with various mechanical tools. The hangar floor is slippery with oil and blood, increasing the DC of Acrobatics checks to balance and tumble by 2.

**Creatures:** Not all the victims of Herembour's rampage were ripped to pieces; he strangled a few with chains. Due to the Shadow Plane's proximity to the Negative Energy Plane and the hangar's position in the thin atmosphere, these four murdered kayals rose again as nihilis with a burning hatred for all living things (though they have a healthy fear of the corrupted Herembour). These undead hide on the darkened ceiling and attempt to creep down the chains, attacking as the PCs examine the starship section and bodies.

### UNDEAD MECHANICS(4) CR 8

**XP 4,800 each**

Kayal nihili (see page 57, *Starfi der Alien Archive* 82)  
NE Medium undead

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision  
60 ft.; **Perception** +16

**Aura** gravity well (5 ft., DC 18)

**DEFENSE** **HP 125 EACH**  
**EAC** 20; **KAC** 22

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

**Immunities** undead immunities

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

DECONSTRUCTOR



**Melee** slam +19 (2d6+12 P)

**Offensive Abilities** decompression gaze (15 ft., DC 18, 1d10+6 B)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Each undead mechanic chooses a different PC to attack, focusing its slam attacks on that PC and relying on its decompression gaze to affect that PC and any others who dare to get too close.

**Morale** The undead mechanics fight until they are destroyed.

#### STATISTICS

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

**Skills** Athletics +21 (+29 to climb), Engineering +16, Stealth +16

**Other Abilities** unliving

### A3. TOOL ROOM (CR 12)

Several tools have been pulled from their cabinets along the walls and are arranged on the floor in a horrific display. A halo of gore-covered drill bits lies around a handheld electric drill. An automatic hammer drips a line of blood that snakes around an unidentifiable, pulped organ. A circular saw spattered with an unidentified liquid leans against a short stack of clean saw blades. Spools of wire and other fasteners are scattered everywhere. A metal sink in one corner of the room appears to be filled with a mixture of blood and oil. A door leads west.

A barely living kayal mechanic lies twitching on the floor among the tools. He is on his stomach, almost completely dissected and partially dismembered. The exposed muscles of his flayed back throb in time with his slowing heartbeat. Copper wire has been threaded into his skin in places, connecting to his detached right arm a foot away from the cauterized stump. He occasionally lets out a pained moan as Herembour's sheer force of will keeps him at the edge of death.

**Creatures:** Herembour, wrapped in a sheet of bloodstained plastic and carrying a pair of gory tools, stands over the kayal mechanic. Hooks pierce Herembour's shoulders, attached to chains that reach up to the ceiling and disappear into darkness; these chains rustle of their own accord and grant the kayal a flight speed. When the PCs enter the room, Herembour speaks.

"Pain, she told me, can inspire prophecy, but all this one does is scream." The sinister figure says, his voice distant and cold. "I heard her whispers in a dream. She said you'd come. She told me to violate your routine." He shrugs out of the plastic tarp as robots standing frozen in the corners of the room suddenly jerk back to life with spastic motion. The chains attached the former kayal engineer come alive, lifting him into the air, as blood runs down his limbs in red rivulets.

He wields a nail gun in one hand and a drill in the other that begins spinning with shrill, metallic sound. "Tell me, have I ruined your day yet?"

Herembour and a trio of corrupted repair robots attack at this point. The robots seem to take delight in causing pain to living creatures, even though they have no faces to express such an emotion.

### CORRUPTED REPAIR BOTS (3) CR 7

**XP** 3,200 each

N Small construct (technological)

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;

**Perception** +14

**DEFENSE** HP 100 EACH

**EAC** 19; **KAC** 20

**Fort** +5; **Ref** +5; **Will** +9

**Immunities** construct immunities

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** slam +16 (1d8+12 B)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Each robot moves toward the nearest PC and attacks with its sturdy appendages.

**Morale** The robots fight until they are destroyed.

#### STATISTICS

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

**Skills** Athletics +14, Computers +19, Engineering +19, Physical Science +19

**Languages** Common, Shadowtongue (can't speak any language)

### HEREMBOUR CR 10

**XP** 9,600

Male variant kayal (see page 57)

LE Medium outsider (native)

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;

**Perception** +19

**DEFENSE** HP 145

**EAC** 23; **KAC** 25

**Fort** +11; **Ref** +9; **Will** +13

**Defensive Abilities** shadow blending; **DR** 8/good or silver;

**Resistances** cold 5, electricity 5

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 20 ft. (Su, average)

**Melee** carbon drill +21 (2d10+18 P)

**Ranged** nail gun +19 (3d6+10 P)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Herembour remains near the ceiling, approximately 20 feet from the ground, and fires his nail gun from the shadows for several rounds. On the fourth round, he lands near the PC who has taken the most damage and asks them to join him in suffering. He activates his velstrac rejuvenation after taking a

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critical hit or being reduced to fewer than 100 Hit Points, whichever comes first.

**Morale** Driven insane by his corruption, Herembour fights to the death and dies with a smile on his face.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** +8; **Dex** +5; **Con** +1; **Int** +3; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +1

**Skills** Acrobatics +24 (+32 to fly), Bluff +19, Engineering +24, Sleight of Hand +19, Stealth +24

**Languages** Common, Shadowtongue

**Other Abilities** shadow blending, shadow manifestations



HEREMBOUR

(painful clarity\*, pain refuge\*, velstrac durability\*, velstrac rejuvenation\*)

**Gear** estex suit III, carbon drill (functions as a ripper spined blade<sup>AR</sup>) with 1 battery (20 charges), nail gun (functions as an elite semi-auto pistol) with 20 nails

\*See "Corrupted by Shadows" in *Starfinder Adventure Path #10: The Diaspora Strain*

**Treasure:** Before he was corrupted, Herembour was tweaking a pair of weapons to be installed onto a starship for security purposes. These weapons—an anharmonic dirge cannon (*Starfinder Armory* 23) and a white star plasma caster—can be spotted on a work table.

**Development:** When the PCs kill Herembour, the tortured kayal engineer on the floor expels a final shuddering breath and then dies. The chains fall limp with a clatter, signaling the beginning of the end of the corruption's effects on Shadow Skydock. Father Gloom and his workers arrive soon after to take control of the facility and clean up the place.

## SHADOW REWARDS

Father Gloom is generally pleased with how the PCs handled the problem and is prepared to supply them with a shadow copy of their starship, even throwing in some upgrades for their trouble.

It takes 2 days for the kayal workers to get Shadow Skydock cleaned up and fully back online. Father Gloom offers the PCs a comfortable place to rest in the city below. He also gives them a datapad with which they can design a tier 11 version of their starship, which the kayals build at no cost and in 1 day once the facility is online. This version of the PCs' starship exists only on the Shadow Plane, and any upgrades don't apply to the one on the Material Plane, so the PCs should feel free to make as many alterations as they please. For instance, since they won't be able to use their Drift engines on the Shadow Plane—a fact Father Gloom can tell them), they can spend those Build Points on other equipment.

In addition, if the PCs have been negotiating with Father Gloom in good faith, he will make an offer. Read or paraphrase the following.

Father Gloom speaks softly. "I'm grateful for your help, and I'm sure you have suffered somewhat on this journey. I understand you are afraid of the corruption within you—sleeping in some, raging in others—but there are ways to master this power without giving into it. If you wish, I can perform a ritual and grant you the Midnight Lord's blessing to allow you to overcome some of the drawbacks of the shadow living inside of you. Beware, though, this will not cure your corruption—it might even tempt you closer to allowing the shadow to swallow your soul. In addition, the ritual requires you to endure the smallest taste of





## SIGNAL OF SCREAMS

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pain—merely a gift to take with you as a reminder of your time here with us.” He smiles.

If any PC wishes to accept Father Gloom’s offer, he leads them to a stark and disturbing chapel of Zon-Kuthon, where they receive a painful piercing or tattoo (their choice). Each participating PC must then attempt a Fortitude save (DC = 10 + half her level + the number of manifestations she has). On a success, the PC can ignore the drawbacks of one their manifestation’s stains for as long as they keep the piercing or tattoo. A PC can undergo this ritual and attempt this saving throw only once.

## PART 2: STARLESS SKIES

With an upgraded shadow starship, the PCs can leave Shadow Skydock and make their way to the Diaspora. The journey takes 1d4+2 days, as the PCs must use their conventional thrusters. However, the light from stars in other systems doesn’t penetrate very far into Shadow Plane space, making it difficult to tell how much progress is being made. The PCs should feel like they are floating in

an infinite expanse of darkness, and even though they are within the Shadow Pact Worlds, their sensors are partially occluded by the shadowstuff that makes up the plane. Enforce the unsettling loneliness of the journey, though the PCs might enjoy this quiet interlude before they reach Dr. Gragant’s lair.

### EVENT 3: SCREAMS IN THE DARKNESS (CR 11)

Partway through the journey to New Elysium, the PCs’ ship’s sensors detect a single vessel moving quickly toward them. A PC who succeeds at a DC 32 Computers check can tell the other ship’s intentions are hostile before it is upon them, much faster than should be possible, allowing the starship combat to start as normal. Otherwise, the velstrac vessel can take a free pilot action to establish its position before starship combat truly begins. A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Mysticism check understands that this is because, even in space, distances on the Shadow Plane are compact compared to their corresponding distances on the Material Plane.

The starship broadcasts the following message to the PCs as combat begins.

“Welcome to the Shadow Plane, unknown vessel. We invite you to partake of carnal experiences never before known to your kind. Lower your shields and be embraced.”



**Starship Combat:** The PCs face the *Screamer*, a velstrac Tormentor-class vessel. Though unrelated to Dr. Gragant's machinations, the velstrac crew of the *Screamer* don't look kindly on what they see as the PCs' intrusion onto the Shadow Plane. They want to capture the PCs and "enlighten" them to the ways of velstracs. If the PCs do lower their shields, the *Screamer* fires one of its *summoning torpedoes* at their ship and moves away to a safe distance, confident the torpedo's

payload will take care of the PCs (or at least soften them up for easier conquest later).

If the PCs fight the *Screamer* attempts to wear down their shields in one quadrant to prime them for a *summoning torpedo*. The velstracs grow a little more desperate if their vessel is reduced to half its Hull Points, firing torpedo after torpedo at the PCs' vessel, hoping one will deliver its deadly payload. Once they have hit and dealt Hull Point damage with a *summoning torpedo*, the *Screamer* then backs off from the fight, possibly feigning surrender to give time for the summoned horror to strike.

## THE SCREAMER

TIER 9

Velstrac Tormentor (see inside front cover)

HP 100

**Development:** If the PCs' vessel is reduced to 0 Hull Points before the velstracs can deliver a successful *summoning torpedo* attack, they do so at this point and move their vessel away. Continue to **Event 4**, and if the *Screamer* is still nearby when the PCs defeat the heretic velstracs, the velstrac crew can see they are no match for the PCs and don't engage them again.

**Story Award:** For defeating or driving off the *Screamer* in starship combat, award the PCs 12,800 XP.

## EVENT 4: HULL BREACH (CR 12)

Once the *Screamer* backs away (or is destroyed), the PCs can assess the damage done to their own vessel. A PC who succeeds at a DC 26 Computers or Engineering check discovers that one of the torpedo hits from the velstrac starship caused a minor hull breach—and detects a new life-form on board!

**Creature:** The *summoning torpedo* has called forth a dangerous creature to menace the PCs. To inflict the most terror, velstracs infuse their *summoning torpedoes* with minor telepathic abilities, enabling them to quickly scan the inhabitants of an affected ship and manifest their fears. Due to the PCs' recent adventures on Verces, the summoned horror appears as a 12-foot-tall musclebound verthani with malfunctioning cybernetic implants, vicious claws, and sharpened canines. Tiny red pinpoints glow in the center of the horror's eyes, and its hair floats around its head as if underwater. When it is summoned, it begins roving through the PCs' vessel, searching for the party in order to inflict torment on them

## SUMMONED HORROR

CR 12

XP 19,200

LE Large outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful)

**Init** +4; **Senses** blindsense (life) 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.;

**Perception** +22

SUMMONED HORROR



**Aura** frightful presence (30 ft., DC 19)

## DEFENSE

HP 200

EAC 26; KAC 28

Fort +14; Ref +14; Will +13

**Defensive Abilities** ferocity; DR 10/good or silver;

**Resistances** cold 10

**Weaknesses** light blindness

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 50 ft.

**Melee** bite +26 (6d4+20 P) or

claw +26 (4d6+20 S)

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

## TACTICS

**Before Combat** The summoned horror creeps through the corridors of the PCs' starship and attempts to ambush a lone PC who strays from the rest of the party.

**During Combat** The summoned horror is a straightforward combatant, tearing into a single opponent with its claws and fangs. It growls detailed threats of the terrible violence it intends to inflict upon the PCs, though its mouth moves strangely when it does so, as if it is unused to speaking aloud.

**Morale** The summoned horror fights until it is destroyed, whereupon it dissolves into a cloud of thick black smoke. The cloud lingers for a moment before being sucked into the ship's ventilation systems.

## STATISTICS

Str +8; Dex +4; Con +5; Int +3; Wis +2; Cha +0

**Skills** Athletics +27, Intimidate +22, Stealth +22

**Languages** Common, Shadowtongue

**Development:** After defeating the intruding outsider, the PCs can continue of their way to the Diaspora and New Elysium, though you should endeavor to keep them on their toes, mentioning other unusual vessels just out of range that appear to be tracking their movements.

## HEART OF NIGHT

As they sleep while their vessel approaches the Diaspora, the PCs are tormented by horrible nightmares of being strapped to an altar of solid shadow while a winged humanoid figure stands over them. The fell ritual reaches a climax of high-pitched cries and shrieks, and the winged figure plunges a wicked-looking dagger into the dreamer's chest, causing that PC to suddenly awaken with a sharp pain in that same area. Multiple PCs can have identical dreams simultaneously, and they all end the same way.

When the PCs are within hours of New Elysium, their ships' sensors pick up unusual readings: the shadow signal that caused their corruption can be heard loud and clear on their receivers, as if a normal wireless broadcast were somehow stretching out into space. The shadow signal is a jumble of screams, whispering voices promising untold pleasures, bursts of static, and sounds of the grinding of

rusty gears and churning of pistons. If the PCs listen long enough, an intelligible female voice begins to cut through the clamor.

"You hold such uncompromising adherence to your sense of self when I can shred your consciousness and reveal vistas unimaginable to your sleeping eyes! Why do you get in the way of your own liberation? Let me purify you from the slavery stitched in your flesh. Let us give you ultimate freedom!"

At your discretion, a PC who listens to the shadow signal for an extended period of time might have to attempt a Will saving throw to avoid advancing their shadow corruption (see "Corrupted by Shadows" in *Starfinder Adventure Path* #10).

Whether or not the PCs listen to the shadow signal, their vessel eventually reaches the coordinates of the Shadow Plane reflection of New Elysium. However, what the PCs see when they arrive might surprise them: where the resort asteroid should be is a titanic human heart, floating incongruously in space. A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Computers check using their ship's scanners can determine that New Elysium's asteroid (as well as the source of the shadow signal) is at the center of the heart. It is impossible to get specifics about anything that has changed about the resort or if there are any life-forms on it, as the heart seems to be giving off massive amounts of strange energy. The same check also reveals an opening on the surface that leads into the heart, near a relatively flat space where a starship can land.

If the PCs fire on the heart with their starship weapons, they quickly find that it is impenetrable. The heart is also warded with powerful magic that prevents any teleportation into or out of it. The PCs will have to brave the tunnels of the Heartgate if they want to reach Shadow New Elysium and Dr. Gragant.

## B. HEARTGATE

In addition to helping her learn how to control and amplify the shadow signal, Dr. Gragant's velstrac allies taught her to harness her force of will to manipulate the essence of the Shadow Plane. This has allowed her to create several tableaux of her memories and experiences, excising them from her consciousness in the process (see area C) while also forming a morbid defensive structure around the entire asteroid: a massive beating human heart. However, such an endeavor has a cost, though it is one Dr. Gragant was more than willing to pay. The heart is essentially constructed from several of the doctor's more positive emotions: compassion, gratitude, love, and serenity. These feelings are housed in several chambers known as the Heartgate, and accessing them allows passage to the asteroid. Several sentient beings (many of whom were drawn to the Shadow Plane

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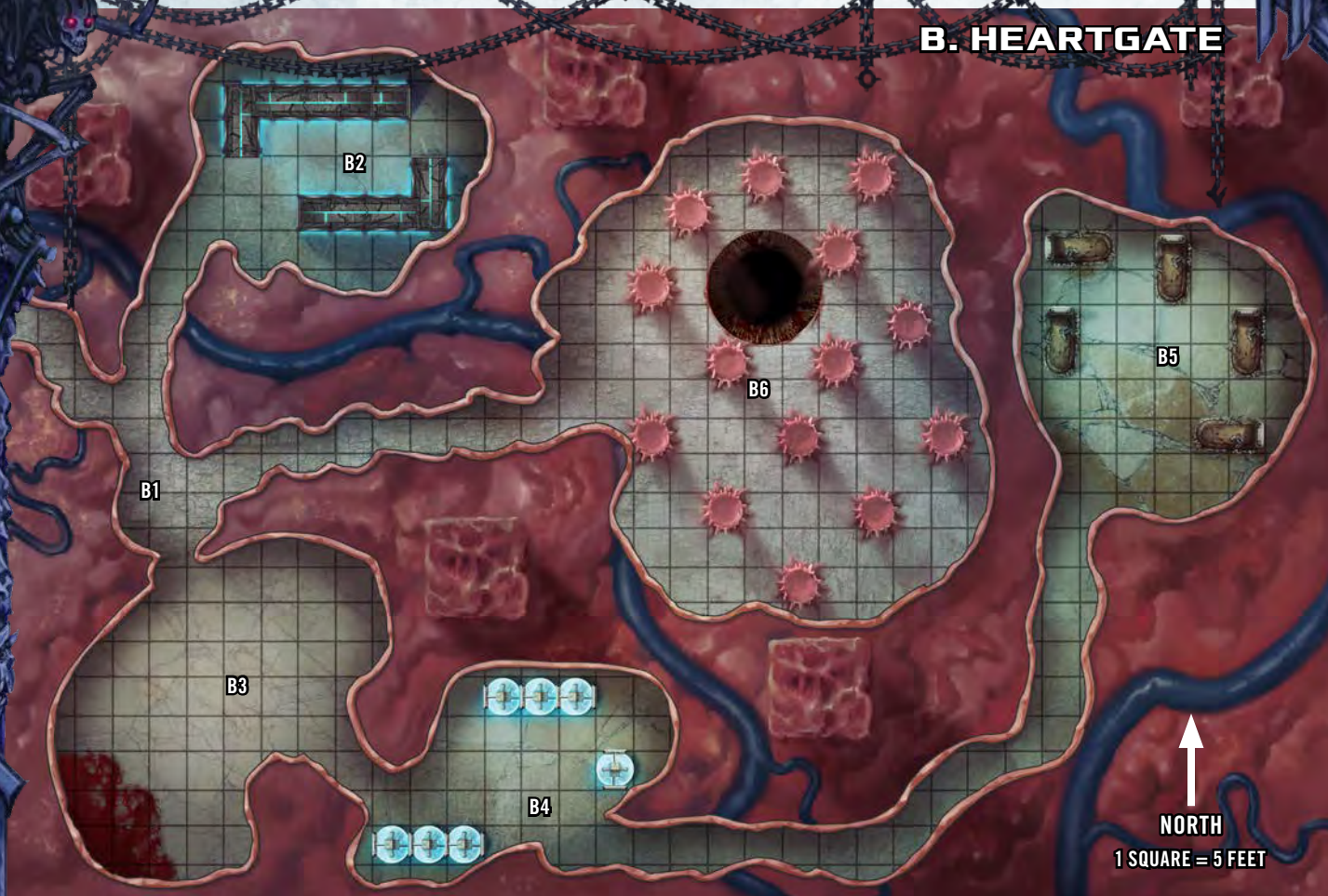
### THE SHADOW PLANE

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## B. HEARTGATE



from the Material Plane) were drawn to the Heartgate by the seductive pull of Dr. Gragant's shadow signal, and though they might not know the doctor personally, they instinctually guard the area.

As the PCs land their starship near the sole passage into the heart and step out onto the surface, they can feel the warmth radiating from the heart tissue. It is slightly elastic (like real flesh) and moves slightly in a rhythmic pattern, as if the heart were beating. Minutes after the PCs touch down, tendrils of tissue begin snaking their way onto the PCs' shadow starship, tethering it to the surface. If the PCs stick around long enough, they witness their starship slowly turning into an organic extension of the heart, the exterior plating becoming flesh, the wires turning into veins, and the various rooms transforming into shapeless chambers. This process is inevitable (and doesn't affect the real version of the PCs' ship on the Material Plane), though it doesn't prevent the use of the vessel. Though the ship seems to bleed and groan in pain if it is torn from the heart, it slowly reverts back to its normal state in a matter of hours in deep space.

The passage into the heart slopes downward for several hundred feet before coming to area **B1**. The tunnels of the Heartgate are 12 feet high, while most of the chambers stretch up to 30 feet in height. The walls, ceilings, and floors of the Heartgate are made from the same fleshy

material as the surface and are as impervious to the PCs' weaponry as the exterior of the heart was to their starship weapons. The atmosphere within the tunnels and chambers is breathable, but the air is warm and humid (though not so hot that the PCs must attempt Fortitude saves to avoid nonlethal damage). The gravity within the Heartgate is normal. Like most places on the Shadow Plane, the interior of the Heartgate glows with a dim light from unknown sources.

### B1. HEARTGATE ENTRANCE

The tunnels here stretch off in multiple directions, while the western passage leads upward to the heart's surface. The tunnels constrict somewhat with a simple rhythm, as if trying to push blood along, though this doesn't impede movement through them. A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check hears a series of droning chants coming from the southern passage.

### B2. THE ACCEPTANCE OF SELF (CR 11)

Two ten-foot-tall, free-standing, L-shaped walls stand in the center of this room, each lined with hundreds of shards of mirrors—some larger than others—that face inward. The mirrors reflect one another in a dizzying display of infinity. The other sides of these structures appear to be made from



rusting and bloodstained steel that pierces the red flesh of the floor.

The "seed" of this chamber was harvested from Dr. Gragant's sense of serenity: the peaceful acceptance of her self-image. As Dr. Gragant often saw herself as a failure, especially in her professional career, and has spent the last decade modifying her physical form, she had no difficulty cutting this emotion out of herself.

The dim light reflected by the mirror shards has been magically amplified to form an area of bright light between the two walls. A PC who steps into this bright light can clearly see images of themselves in the many shards, though many of them are subtly wrong: showing a slightly different hair color or a scar where there is none, for instance. A PC who looks too closely at these incorrect reflections risks becoming too enthralled by them (see Trap below). However, looking into the mirror shards is necessary to gain part of the key that allows them to exit the Heartgate (see Development below).

**Trap:** A PC standing in the area of bright light and looking into the mirror shards for more than a few moments (1 round) triggers the trap for themselves. Failing the Will saving throw means that PC begins to see more and more drastic changes in their reflections and becomes fascinated with examining and pointing out these alterations. Each round spent doing so drains that character's life force (which doesn't break the fascination effect), but the PC can attempt a new saving throw each round to break free. The trap affects each PC in the bright light separately, unless the trap is disabled or more than half the PCs succeed at their saving throws against the trap, whereupon the bright light fades to dim light for 10 minutes, after which the trap resets.

A PC who isn't affected by the trap can aid an ally who is by succeeding at a DC 32 Diplomacy check, or by physically shaking that PC (though remember that any PC who enters the bright light might be affected by the trap, even if they earlier succeeded at the saving throw to break free). A PC who closes their eyes while stepping into the bright light can't be affected by the trap, but must succeed at a DC 30 Perception check (with a -4 penalty) each round to find the ally they want to shake. An aided PC gains a +2 circumstance bonus to their saving throw to break free for 1 round.

### SELF-REFLECTION TRAP

CR 11

XP 12,800

**Type** magical; **Perception** DC 36; **Disable** Mysticism DC 31 (disrupt mesmerizing effect)

**Trigger** location; **Reset** 10 minutes; **Bypass** close eyes

**Initial Effect** fascinated; Will DC 21 negates; multiple targets (all intelligent creatures in the area of bright light); **Secondary Effect** drained (2d12 negative energy damage per round until fascinated condition is removed); any target with the fascinated condition in the area of bright light

**Treasure:** With the trap disabled or overcome, the mirror shards offer normal reflections. However, the first PC to succeed at a DC 32 Perception check while glancing into the safe mirrors notices one of their reflections hold up a glowing crystal and then place it in one of their pockets or containers. That PC then realizes that they have a *mk 3 ability crystal* in their possession. The memories held in this crystal seem to be of alternate-reality versions of the PCs. Only one PC can obtain this crystal.

**Development:** If the PCs disable or overcome the trap, a small white stone appears on the ground in the center of the chamber. This stone has a magic aura and can be identified as part of a mystical mechanism with a successful DC 30 Mysticism check. It is one of four keys required to open the center of the Heartgate in area B6 to reach Shadow New Elysium.

### B3. LOVE'S EMBRACE (CR 12)

An enormous head formed from bone and sinew juts from the southwestern wall of this chamber, its features casting a beatific gaze downward at a square stone altar. The altar bulges at the top, showing a hemispherical surface that is jagged and pitted. The air here smells of cinnamon and freshly baked bread.

This area was born from the love within Dr. Gragant's heart, an emotion that for all practical purposes died with her parents. Throwing herself into her research, Dr. Gragant never felt the need to pursue romantic relationships. Though she had a few friends (mostly other scientists in her field) before her accident, she never truly felt close to any of them. She hasn't missed this particular emotion in the years she has been trapped on the Shadow Plane.

The head is an image of Dr. Gragant before her transformation, but the PCs most likely couldn't recognize her. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Wisdom check notes the figure in the shared nightmare the PCs had at the beginning of "The Penumbra Protocol" bears a passing familiarity to the titanic head, even though that figure was mostly draped in shadow. The statue is immune to all damage as long as the draelik idolaters (see Creatures below) are still alive, but it doesn't radiate a magical aura.

**Creatures:** Four draeliks passing through the Pact Worlds several months ago were affected by Dr. Gragant's shadow signal, and while they avoided becoming tainted by corruption, they nevertheless fell under the scientist's sway. However, instead of becoming obsessed with the line between pleasure and pain, they came to worship Dr. Gragant as a god. They soon discovered a way to slip onto the Shadow Plane and subsequently found this chamber. Despite never having met her, the draeliks' adulation of Dr. Gragant caused the gigantic statue of her face in the wall to manifest, as well as the altar, which they occasionally

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use to sacrifice pieces of themselves to her. After the draeliks feel that Dr. Gragant has accepted their offering they then consume the amputated limbs and pieces of flesh. The power of their adulation and the malleable nature of reality within the Heartgate cause the draeliks to slowly and painfully regenerate, an effect that they draeliks believe is a sign of Dr. Gragant's favor. In reality, she is unaware of these devotees.

When the PCs enter this chamber, the draeliks have just finished one of their many rituals and are preparing to offer their flesh to Dr. Gragant. They look up from the altar and greet the PCs with friendly smiles and open arms.

*"Welcome! Have you come to show your love for the Blessed Lady?" The draelik gestures toward the large, gruesome effigy. "She gathers all in her embrace and asks for so very little in return."*

The draelik idolaters are happy to answer questions about "the Blessed Lady," but that epithet is the only name they know for Dr. Gragant. They explain they were drawn to this place by a religious fervor and have spent the past few months worshipping their new god. They don't find it odd that they no longer have to sleep, eat, or drink, and if asked about it, they say they barely recall the base urges of the flesh anymore. From the draeliks' description of the subliminal call that brought them to the Shadow Plane, the PCs should be able to determine that Dr. Gragant is the one responsible.

However, the draeliks can't be convinced that Dr. Gragant is evil and needs to be stopped. If the PCs insist that the draeliks stop worshipping her or state outright that their goal is to destroy Dr. Gragant, the draeliks become incensed and ready their *shadowstaves* to attack with cries of "For the Blessed Lady!"

On the other hand, the PCs might want to keep their intentions to themselves and participate in the idolaters' ceremony. The draeliks are pleased to bring in new potential converts and explain that they are about to make their daily offerings. As the PCs watch, one of the draeliks pulls out a razor-sharp knife and slices off one of his fingers, letting it fall onto the altar. He then holds the knife out to one of the PCs, stating, "the Blessed Lady wishes to taste of your flesh newcomer." The PC is likely to refuse to mutilate himself, which upsets the idolaters. If the PCs attempt to leave at this point (or if they try to leave before the offerings begin), the draeliks ready their weapons in a menacing manner and insist that the PCs participate. Any further refusals lead to combat.

If any PC wishes to cut himself, they must deal 1d8 slashing damage that is taken directly from their Hit Points, slicing off a sliver of flesh or the tip of an appendage. This might not seem so horrifying to the PCs, but after all of the idolaters have made their offerings, there follows several

minutes of silent prayer. Then, one of the draeliks claps his hands together and says, "The Blessed Lady is pleased. Praise be. And as always, she bids us to be whole again." That draelik picks up the piece of flesh offered by one of the PCs and pops it into his mouth and chews with gusto. The PCs are directed to do the same, and refusal is seen as an affront that leads to combat.

In the unlikely event the PCs participate in the entire ceremony, they find themselves compelled to stay in this chamber and continue to worship the Blessed Lady. Over time, the offerings become more and more bloody until the PCs are removing whole limbs (which eventually grow back in an agonizing process). At any point, a PC can attempt a DC 18 Will saving throw to break free of this compulsion, only to discover several days have passed in a haze of self-mutilation and cannibalism. A PC who has their wits about them can shake an ally to prompt the same Will save or attack the draelik idolaters; such a violent, nonloving act frees the other PCs from the spell.

## **DRAELIK IDOLATERS (4) CR 8**

**XP 4,800 each**

Male and female draeliks (*Starfi der Alien Archive* 36)

LE Medium humanoid (draelik)

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

**DEFENSE** **HP 115 EACH**

**EAC** 20; **KAC** 21

**Fort** +7; **Ref** +9; **Will** +11; +2 vs. necromancy effects

### **OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** *shadowstaff* +15 (2d6+10 B, P, or S)

**Ranged** *shadowstaff* +17 (2d4+8 C)

**Offensive Abilities** touch of autocannibalism (DC 18)

**Draelik Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 8th; melee +15)

1/day—*wisp ally*

At will—*fatigue* (DC 15), *ghost sound* (DC 15)

### **TACTICS**

**During Combat** Two draelik idolaters begin combat by using their touch of autocannibalism ability on two of the closest PCs. They follow that up with *fatigue* and melee attacks. The other two draelik idolaters move a short distance away and cast *wisp ally*, followed by using the ranged capabilities of their *shadowstaves* to shoot any obvious spellcasters.

**Morale** The draelik idolaters fight to the death.

### **STATISTICS**

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

**Skills** Acrobatics +16, Bluff +21, Diplomacy +16, Mysticism +21, Stealth +21

**Languages** Aklo, Common

**Gear** advanced lashunta tempweave, *shadowstaff*<sup>AA</sup> with 1 clip (40 charges)

### **SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Touch of Autocannibalism (Su)** As a standard action, a



draeliek idolater can attempt to touch a single target (making a melee attack against the target's EAC). A struck target must attempt a DC 18 Will saving throw. If successful, the target is staggered for 1 round as it is briefly wracked with pangs of hunger. If unsuccessful, the target is overcome with a compulsion to eat its own flesh, causing it to be staggered for 8 rounds. Each round, the target can bite its own exposed flesh as a standard action, dealing an amount of piercing damage to itself equal to 1d6 + its Strength modifier. If it does so, the target loses the staggered condition. However, if it doesn't continue to chew at its own flesh (and the duration of the effect hasn't ended), it gains the staggered condition again at the beginning of its next turn.

**Development:** Once the draeliks have been defeated, the PCs can get a closer look at the altar in the center of the chamber. It consists of an unusual translucent but dark stone that is composed of solid shadowstuff. A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Mysticism or DC 32 Perception check while examining it can see a small, more solid stone in the center of the altar. While the altar can't be broken with physical force, the application of any positive energy (such as from a mystic's healing touch ability or a *mystic cure* spell) melts the shadowstuff like flame applied to a block of ice. The same occurs if a PC touches the altar with both hands, concentrates on feelings of love and empathy, and succeeds at a DC 30 Diplomacy check.

When the altar disappears, the head of Dr. Gragant begins to crumble. After a few moments, only a featureless oval remains in its place.

The small black stone has a magic aura and can be identified as part of a mystical mechanism with a successful DC 30 Mysticism check. It is one of four keys required to open the center of the Heartgate in area **B6** to reach Shadow New Elysium.

## B4. DEBT OF GRATITUDE (CR 11)

The northern and southern walls of this chamber are lined with cylindrical machines, each with single large opening in the front covered by a clear plastic door. A single touch sensor is situated above each of the doors. A smaller cylindrical machine is to the east, with a wide maw at the top and a hopper at the bottom. A rectangular fountain, currently devoid of water, sits in the center of the room; it is a display of abstract forms and shapes made from a cartilaginous material. Several holographic signs are posted on the walls.

This chamber was created from Dr. Gragant's gratitude, her ability to feel thankful for actions performed by others on her behalf. She was initially appreciative of Eclipse Innovations for giving her the chance to work on her research when all others seemed to abandon her, but after years of funding with no concrete results, the corporation began to hold this debt over her. As they pressured Dr. Gragant to produce, she began to resent Eclipse more and more, her gratitude fading to nothing. She excised what sliver was left to place here.



DRAELIK IDOLATER

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The holographic signs display messages in a shifting variety of languages, cycling to Common most regularly. The signs offer platitudes such as "Be thankful for what you receive, and return the generosity in kind" and similar passages.

The six devices to the north and south are essentially vending machines. A PC needs only to touch the sensor on one of them, and the machine quickly creates an appropriate item that the PC is likely to want. The machine to the east is a recycler, which reduces items to UPBs equal to 10% of their cost. A PC who succeeds at a DC 28 Engineering check can recognize the function of all of the devices here.

Before the PCs enter this chamber, you should figure out at least one appropriate item that a machine might offer each PC. If a PC hasn't upgraded their weapon or armor recently, the machine creates one that would be suited for them. Otherwise, the machine makes a magic or hybrid item that would interest that PC (perhaps one the PCs has been talking about purchasing when they get enough credits). Avoid offering the PCs augmentations, as they take some time to install and the PCs are approaching the end of the Adventure Path. An offered item should be 12th level or lower (but not lower than 10th level, if possible). Each PC can get only one of these items, and taking the item has the possibility of triggering the trap (see Trap below). If you have enough items prepared, you can decide that a PC can refuse to take the item and touch the sensor again to get a different item, though the first item vanishes in a puff of smoke.

**Trap:** The signs in this chamber should be enough to warn the PCs that the gifts they receive from the machines aren't exactly free. If a PC takes a proffered item from a machine, they get the feeling that they should give thanks. They have approximately 1 minute to surrender a different item to the recycling machine in the eastern end of the room. The item the PCs surrender must be a non-consumable item of at least 9th level to protect that PC against the room's curse; anything else placed in the recycling machine is immediately turned into an amount of UPBs equal to 10% of the item's value (which the PCs can take) and the feeling that the PC has that they should give thanks remains. If the PC offer an appropriate item, the recycling machine emits a pleasant tone (but does not provide any UPBs) and the compulsion toward gratitude dissipates.

If a PC decides to return the proffered item, they can attempt a DC 32 Bluff or Diplomacy check to feign gratitude for being given a gift without accepting it. A successful check bypasses the trap for that PC, but this success doesn't count toward the number of PCs needed to activate the fountain (see Development below).

If a PC doesn't surrender an appropriate item within the 1-minute time limit, the feeling of needing to express gratitude is replaced by one of shame, and all their hybrid and magic items, including the gifted item, are affected by the curse trap here. A cursed hybrid or magical item imparts

a -4 penalty on attack rolls or skill checks for which it is used, or a -4 penalty to AC if it is a suit of armor. Alternatively, if the item doesn't fit into any of these categories, it instead functions only 50% of the time, consuming charges or daily uses even if it doesn't function. This curse remains until removed by *remove affliction* or similar magic or if a character succeeds at a DC 40 Mysticism check that takes 10 minutes for a single item.

## THANKLESSNESS TRAP

CR 11

XP 12,800

**Type** magical; **Perception** DC 36; **Disable** Mysticism DC 31 (dispel curse)

**Trigger** touch (a proffered item); **Reset** 1 round; **Bypass** surrender an item (see above)

**Effect** curse (hybrid and magical items malfunction; this is a curse effect); Will DC 20 negates (items of 12th level or above only; lower-level items receive no save); multiple targets (all hybrid and magical items carried by creature who doesn't surrender an item in exchange [see above])

**Development:** When at least half of the PCs express the appropriate gratitude for the gifts given to them (or the trap has been disabled), the fountain in the center begins to function with a spray of cool, clear water. A small blue stone then floats to the surface of the water. This stone has a magic aura and can be identified as part of a mystical mechanism with a successful DC 30 Mysticism check. It is one of four keys required to open the center of the Heartgate in area B6 to reach Shadow New Elysium.

## B5. THE COMPASSION OF DEATH

A tunnel opens up onto a small glade of skeletal trees with bony, leafless branches spreading into a canopy overhead. A half-circle of quiet tombs rises beneath them. Each small structure is delicately carved from red stone and bears loops and whorls of exquisitely carved calligraphy. Four are sealed, while a fifth stands open. A battered sword leans next to the yawning doorway, and scraps of rusted metal armor are scattered nearby.

This chamber was formed out of Dr. Gragant's compassion—a quality that could have been considered one of her strongest positive traits given her study of medicine, but it atrophied soon after she was forced to accept Eclipse Innovation's funding, which turned her research to focus more on its military applications. However, this chamber is still the most powerful of all the areas of the Heartgate.

The trees here are, in fact, composed of bone and sprout from the fleshy ground in a mockery of nature. The material of the tombs appears to be hardened muscle, as heavy and as solid as actual worked stone. Upon closer inspection, the



writing on each tomb is confused and jumbled, forming no actual words or decipherable iconography.

**Creature:** An ancient-looking woman with stringy, gray hair and wrinkled skin is carefully carving images into the lintel above the open door of the fifth tomb. She is wearing the remnants of Steward armor, something a PC can recognize with a successful DC 15 Culture check. She is muttering to herself and doesn't notice the PCs' approach.

This is **Divania** (LN female human soldier), a human Steward agent who, along with several team members, took their starship out on a mission several years ago and never returned. They were accidentally pulled into the Shadow Plane while investigating a disturbance linked to Diasporan space pirates driven mad by Dr. Gragant's shadow signal. The Stewards' vessel crashed on the heart after a heated battle with velstrac ships. Divania's comrades perished in the crash, and blinded by grief, she dragged them here to this chamber of the Heartgate and attempted to memorialize them. Unfortunately, due to the proximity of the shadow signal generator and the unusual nature of the Shadow Plane, she has not been successful.

While Divania has resisted the effects of shadow corruption, her mind is not still whole. She has aged considerably faster than the few years she has been in the Heartgate would suggest, though she no longer needs to eat, drink, or sleep, as her life force has been linked to the act of compassion she attempts to perform for her fallen comrades. Divania cannot die until she finishes the five tombs, but until she recognizes that the final resting place is for herself, she will continue this effort for eternity. She knows in the back of her mind that something isn't quite right but tries to solve this problem by continually tearing down the last tomb and building it up again.

When the PCs get Divania's attention, her initial attitude depends on the depth of the PCs' corruption. If there are two or more PCs with three or more manifestations, her attitude is unfriendly. Otherwise, she is indifferent. Unless the PCs deliberately sneak up on her, Divania grabs her sword as a precaution. She is not a real danger to the PCs in her current state, and any attack that hits an AC of 10 strikes her, but any damage she takes is transferred to the tombs, making the stones bleed and crack. This causes Divania to scream out in grief and abandon any combat to fix the damage.

Regardless of her initial attitude, she asks the PCs why they have come here to interrupt her search for closure.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 27 Diplomacy check (or DC 32 if she is unfriendly or hostile) can improve Divania's attitude and get her talking. If questioned about her actions, she doesn't realize that she is trapped here and can only ask for help.

"I have waited for so long to finish my companion's tombs, but I can never manage to do it right. I always find some small flaw in the craftsmanship and have to start over again. I don't know if you can help me, but maybe you'll see what my tired eyes can't."

Directly questioning Divania yields few answers; she has lost many of her memories in the intervening years, recalling only that her close friends have died and that she must lay them to rest.

If the PCs point out where she is and the unusual nature of her building materials, she looks horrified for a brief moment but then returns to her work. She refuses to leave the chamber with the PCs, and if they somehow manage to knock her unconscious and drag her from the

chamber, her body begins to thrash and writhe until it eventually shakes itself to literal pieces, which fall to the ground and are absorbed. The PCs find Divania once again if they return to this grove later, though she has forgotten meeting them; the PCs will need to succeed at another Diplomacy check to change her attitude.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 28 Culture check or a DC 34 Perception check while examining the tombs can see that four of them were completed several years ago, but that the fifth one (which currently stands empty) has been torn down and rebuilt several hundred times. If asked who the tomb is for, Divania stares blankly, as if she couldn't hear the question and repeats that some aspect of the fifth tomb remains unfinished and once again asks for the PCs' help. A PC who succeeds at a DC 32 Mysticism check can sense the connection between Divania and the tombs and surmise that the final tomb should be her resting place.

If a PC suggests that the only way for the fifth tomb to be completed is for Divania to take her place inside, she seems reluctant at first. The PCs can convince her that they will take care of the tomb's final preparations by succeeding at a DC 27 Diplomacy check; a character with the priest theme gains a +4 circumstance bonus to this check. If Divania agrees, she steps within the tomb and quietly lays on the bier inside. As she does, her skin begins to slowly flake away, revealing the muscle and bones underneath. However, she seems calm and accepting of this fate and actually breathes a sigh of relief. The PCs can then close the tomb door and



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say a few words of blessing over it with a successful DC 22 Culture or Mysticism check.

**Treasure:** Divania leaves her sword behind when she steps into the tomb. Though it is nicked and worn, it is a perfectly serviceable zero-edge longsword. It only takes a few minutes to clean off and polish, whereupon it seems to shine with its own internal light, though it is not magical.

**Development:** Once Divania has been successfully laid to rest, the dead branches above suddenly bloom with red flowers, dripping with blood. As the first of these drops the blood touches the ground, it transforms into a small red stone. This stone has a magic aura and can be identified as part of a mystical mechanism with a successful DC 30 Mysticism check. It is one of four keys required to open the center of the Heartgate in area **B6** to reach Shadow New Elysium.

**Story Award:** If the PCs successfully put Divania to rest, grant them 9,600 XP.

## B6. GAPING WOUND (CR 13)

A gaping wound in the flesh of the floor occupies the center of this room. It is ringed by a circle of dark metal and electronics that seem to keep the bloody tear open and project a nearly invisible field of force over it. The rest of this chamber is dotted with slowly spinning columns of obsidian embedded with nails, spikes, and other sharp objects and draped with rusting chains. A low moan—it is impossible to whether it is one of pain or pleasure—echoes throughout the area, its source indeterminable.

This nightmarish room is the center of the Heartgate and a gateway that leads to Shadow New Elysium, where Dr. Gragant continues her experiments and maintains the shadow signal. The passage forward is blocked by a technomagical force field that is more conceptual than real. A PC who succeeds at a DC 28 Mysticism check can tell that some kind of arcane key or keys are needed to shut down the force field.

A PC who examines the ring of metal encompassing the open wound notices four small slots, one at each of the cardinal directions. Each slot is ringed with a piece of differently colored metal: black, blue, red, and white. The slots are approximately the same size and shape as the small stones found in the other chambers of the Heartgate. When the PCs place the stones in the appropriately colored slots, the floor rumbles and the force field dissipates. See Development below for a description of what happens when the PCs pass through the gaping wound.

The slowly rotating pillars pose no danger to careful PCs, but they provide the room with a strange and creepy atmosphere and could possibly provide cover. At your discretion, if a character is forced into the same square as one of the pillars, they might take 4d8 piercing damage if they fail a DC 18 Reflex saving throw.

**Creatures:** A strix named Komarta was hired by Eclipse Innovations to provide “certain spiritual services” for the corporation and its employees shortly after Dr. Gragant subsumed the will of the majority of the board. In truth, Kaeon Rhyse met her on the streets of Cuvacara during the takeover of the company and saw in her the potential to help advance the doctor’s goals on the Material Plane. Komarta, already a practiced hand in breaking minds in exchange for money, accepted the new job but soon found herself witnessing strange occurrences and terrible tortures performed in the name of a shadowy benefactor she had never met.

Slightly uncomfortable with the level of cruelty and the bizarre nature of her work, a few weeks ago Komarta demanded of Kaeon Rhyse that she be released from her contract. The verthani executive was none too pleased to hear this and, after consulting with Dr. Gragant, concocted a method to send Komarta to the Shadow Plane along with two other Eclipse operatives who had displeased him. The three have been trapped within this chamber of the Heartgate for at least 2 weeks and were told that their only chance at freedom is to stop any intruders who attempt to pass through here. Frightened but practical, they attack the PCs as they enter, believing anyone who would come to this place must be dealt with.

Even though Komarta and the operatives fight with gusto, a PC who succeeds at a DC 32 Sense Motive check while fighting the strix realizes that she is not entirely acting of her own accord. She isn’t being mentally controlled, but she does seem reluctant to be in this place.

## ECLIPSE OPERATIVES (2)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

Male and female verthani operative (*Starfi der Alien Archive* 118)

LE Medium humanoid (verthani)

**Init** +9; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +23

**DEFENSE** **HP** 135 EACH  
**EAC** 22; **KAC** 23

**Fort** +8; **Ref** +11; **Will** +12

**Defensive Abilities** evasion, uncanny agility

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 50 ft., climb 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

**Melee** tactical knife +17 (2d4+10 S)

**Ranged** red star plasma pistol +19 (1d8+9 E & F; critical burn 1d8)

**Offensive Abilities** debilitating trick, trick attack +5d8, triple attack

## TACTICS

**During Combat** The Eclipse operatives move about the battlefield, using trick attack each round to deal the most damage. The operatives aren’t afraid to end their movement adjacent to PCs who appear to fight mainly with ranged weapons, but they try to stay away from melee combatants.



**Morale** With no real way to return to the Material Plane, the Eclipse operatives fight to the death.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** +1; **Dex** +6; **Con** +0; **Int** +4; **Wis** +3; **Cha** +0

**Skills** Acrobatics +23, Athletics +23, Culture +18, Sense Motive +18, Stealth +23

**Languages** Aklo, Common, Infernal, Shadowtongue

**Other Abilities** operative exploits (uncanny shooter), specialization (daredevil)

**Gear** advanced lashunta tempweave (*haste circuit*), red star plasma pistol with 2 batteries (20 charges each), tactical knife

**Gear** white carbon carbon skin, elite semi-auto pistol with 40 small arm rounds, ultrathin dueling sword, mk 3 ring of resistance

**Development:** If the PCs manage to knock Komarta unconscious, restrain her during the fight, or otherwise stop

### KOMARTA

CR 11

XP 12,800

Female strix mystic (*Starfi der Pact Worlds* 214)

LE Medium humanoid (strix)

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +25

#### DEFENSE

HP 153 RP 5

**EAC** 23; **KAC** 24

**Fort** +10; **Ref** +10; **Will** +14; +2 vs. illusions

**Defensive Abilities** share pain (11 damage, DC 20)

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 30 ft. (Ex, average)

**Melee** ultrathin dueling sword +17 (3d6+11 S)

**Ranged** elite semi-auto pistol +19 (3d6+11 P)

**Offensive Abilities** backlash (11 damage), mental anguish (DC 20), sow doubt (5 rounds, DC 20)

**Mystic Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 11th)

At will—*mindlink*, *telepathic bond*

**Mystic Spells Known** (CL 11th; ranged +19)

4th (3/day)—*enervation*, *mind thrust* (DC 22)

3rd (6/day)—*bestow curse* (DC 21), *dispel magic*, *slow* (DC 21), *synaptic pulse* (DC 21)

2nd (at will)—*hold person* (DC 20), *inflict pain* (DC 20)

**Connection** mindbreaker

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Komarta takes flight above combat and relies on spells such as *bestow curse* and *mind thrust* to hamper the PCs. She regularly spends Resolve Points to use her share pain ability when shot by any of the PCs. If it seems like the PCs are constantly resisting her spells, she turns to using her pistol while remaining in the air.

**Morale** Hoping that pleasing Dr. Gragant will secure her release from the Heartgate, Komarta fights to the death.

#### STATISTICS

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

**Skills** Culture +20, Mysticism +25, Piloting +25, Sense Motive +20

**Languages** Aklo, Common, Infernal, Shadowtongue



KOMARTA

SIGNAL OF  
SCREAMS

HEART  
OF NIGHT

PART 1:  
SHADOW  
MERCES

PART 2:  
LESS  
ES

PART 3:  
MINAL  
JENCY

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PAIGN

SHADOW  
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her from fighting, they can question her. Some of the PCs' questions and Komarta's replies are found below.

**Who are you? What is this place?** "My name is Komarta, and I am somewhat a prisoner here. I have been tasked with guarding this portal as punishment from my former employers at Eclipse Innovations. They said it would be only a matter of days before the galaxy was ready to accept their new way of thinking and then we would be allowed to leave, but I've lost track of time." She shakes her head sadly. "I suppose this is a fitting end for me."

**Why do you think you deserve this?** "I was not a nice person back in Cuvacara. I was an enforcer for hire, and I worked for any slimeball corporation that had the credits to pay me. It didn't matter to me who got hurt as long as I got paid. Figures that when I started to grow a conscience, it landed me here."

**What do you know about Dr. Gragant?** "Only enough to know that Kaeon Rhyse practically worshipped her. The way he spoke of her genius was a little sickening, frankly." Her eyes focus on a distant point. "And the stuff he did in her name... chilling. I told him I didn't want any part of it, and here I am."

**How do we get through here?** "I'm not even sure how I got here! All I was told through a message on my comm unit when I woke up here was that we had to protect this... hole." She gestures at the gaping wound. "It looks like it leads deeper into this disgusting place, so I don't know why anyone would want to go down there. But orders are orders, especially when you don't have any choice but to follow them."

Komarta doesn't know how the force field works, and she isn't keen on accompanying the PCs either to other chambers of the Heartgate or through the portal itself. She insists on remaining in this spot, no matter how much the PCs cajole her into accompanying them. She tells the PCs that she believes they will probably get killed if they proceed and that her previous employer will eventually release her from this captivity as promised.

When the PCs place the four colored stones within the metal ring around the gaping portal (see page 22), they can pass into the wound. There is a sensation of terrible vertigo and a brief moment of mental anguish as the PCs' personalities are temporarily stripped away, after which the PCs arrive on Shadow New Elysium, completely intact both physically and spiritually.

### PART 3: TERMINAL FREQUENCY

Passing through the portal in the Heartgate, the PCs arrive on Shadow New Elysium, a dim reflection of the once-luxurious resort the PCs recently spent several days at.

The whole area feels like the PCs are stepping through a half-formed idea. The resort's many rooms appear no more real than set pieces from a theatrical production. There is no power, though the Shadow Plane's ever-present dim illumination prevents the area from being completely dark. Color has been drained from all surfaces and objects, making it a disquieting and lonely place, even though shadows without sources flit around corners and through doorways as the PCs approach.

## WELCOME BACK

The Heartgate portal deposits the PCs in a gray version of Green Fields, the foliage stunted and colorless, and the artificial river now a dry, rocky bed. There appears to be no way to return to the Heartgate or their ship. From here, the PCs are free to move about Shadow New Elysium as they please, though there isn't anything to discover except for an ominous feeling of being watched. As the PCs explore, feel free to reuse the maps on pages 13 and 16 of *Starfinder Adventure Path #10: The Diaspora Strain*. The PCs might remember the remnants of labs converted from mining facilities deep beneath the asteroid's surface and might suspect (correctly) that Dr. Gragant performed her original experiments in those chambers. If the PCs don't make a beeline toward the mine entrance located past the New Elysium's employee facilities, they feel a tugging in their minds leading them there. Any PC with two or more manifestations feels this pull the strongest—it is almost impossible not to succumb to.

The large metal door that separated the resort from the old mining tunnels on the Material Plane isn't present. Instead an empty doorway opens out onto what appears to be the asteroid's surface. The sky is the deep red of heart tissue, and several dozen feet away, a pair of prefabricated buildings stands next to a cave entrance in a stony hillside. By sticking their head through the doorway, a PC can determine that the environmental conditions are relatively safe (see below).

## C. SHADOW LAB

The accident that trapped Dr. Gragant on the Shadow Plane 13 years ago also twisted and weakened the planar barriers, allowing Dr. Gragant to learn how to mold this area of the Shadow Plane to her will. While some of the chambers here are direct reflections of Material Plane counterparts that existed before the explosion, she has altered many of them. With the help of several mementors—fey creatures with the ability to alter memories—she has created a museum of sorts to her history of pain.

This area has a normal gravity and a breathable atmosphere, though the temperature is uncomfortably cold (though not below 0° F). The asteroid's surface, the freestanding buildings, and the lab interiors are all illuminated by dim light.





## SIGNAL OF SCREAMS

### HEART OF NIGHT

### PART 1: THE SHADOW OF VERCES

### PART 2: STARLESS SKIES

### PART 3: TERMINAL FREQUENCY

### CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

### THE SHADOW PLANE

### ALIEN ARCHIVES

### CODEX OF WORLDS

## C1. STORAGE SHED (CR 10)

As the PCs step out of the resort and onto the asteroid's surface, they hear unusual scraping noises drifting out from this small, squat building. Its only entrance is an airlock, faint blue light leaking from the door's edges. While the airlock is unnecessary, it must still be cycled to enter the building proper. Cycling the airlock alerts the vespers hound inside to the PCs' presence (see Creatures below).

The atmosphere of this storage shed is oppressive and hazy, as if the environmental controls are malfunctioning. Thin bands of lighting run just under the ceiling, barely illuminating the forms of a human, a shirren, and a sarcesian shackled to the wall by chains hooked into their bodies, leaving gruesome wounds. A large bloodstain on one wall above a grotesque pile of chunks of flesh hints at the presence of a fourth body. A large airlock door exits to the east.

This storage shed is a copy of one of many used by the dwarven miners of Ulrikka Clanholdings when they worked on the asteroid, but Dr. Gragant has turned this one into a feeding chamber.

A few days ago, a quartet of space pirates on the Material Plane landed on New Elysium, looking to rob the place. Considering themselves lucky to have slipped past the usual security vessels that patrol the space around the asteroid, they

soon found themselves walking among the carnage caused by the corrupted guests and staff. Greed got the better of them, and they didn't immediately flee. The barriers between planes already thin thanks to the successful testing of the Keys to Elysium app, Dr. Gragant was able to corrupt these space pirates and pull them into the Shadow Plane, hanging them in this room to slowly be driven mad and perish at the claws of the creature she sealed in the chamber with them.

The interior of this shed is illuminated by dim light.

**Creatures:** The sarcesian, named Zunar, remains the only prisoner still alive. He is gravely wounded, unconscious, and helpless, hanging in the northwest corner of the room from hooks embedded in his torso. He occasionally twitches in pain—the only sign of life. Any area effect has the danger of completely snuffing out his life. His gear has been stripped away and destroyed.

However, there is another creature in the room: a vespers hound, locked in here by Dr. Gragant to torture and eat the imprisoned pirates. After consuming three of the captives, it has grown bored and is now angrily pacing the floor. It occasionally scrapes the metal walls with one of its claws, producing loud noises that can be heard outside of the shed. When it hears the airlock cycling, it hides in the southeast corner of the room, waiting to attack anyone who enters. The PCs can attempt Perception checks opposed by the vespers hound's Stealth check, unless they blindly barge into the chamber when they spot the half-alive Zunar.





NORTH  
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



## ZUNAR

CR 8

XP 4,800

Male sarcesian cybercommando (*Starfi der Alien Archive 98*)

HP 105 (currently 5)

### STATISTICS

Gear none

## VESPER'S HOUND

CR 10

XP 9,600

HP 165 (see page 61)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The vespers hound begins by using its prison of chains ability against the clumsiest-looking PC, preferably an envoy or spellcaster. It then uses its slip through the shadows ability to engage a character in melee combat from an unexpected direction.

**Morale** Knowing it can't leave the shed on its own, the vespers hound fights to the death.

**Treasure:** Though the space pirates have been stripped of their gear (much of which was disposed of), a PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check can find a single *mk III serum of healing* discarded in a corner under some oily rags.

**Development:** If Zunar survives the PCs' fight with the vespers hound, he can be awoken with any amount of healing or a successful DC 25 Medicine check. He is able to answer the PCs' questions about how he got here, though some of his memories are hazy. However, Zunar doesn't know that he has been pulled into the Shadow Plane, and he doesn't understand that he has contracted shadow corruption. He can recall only disjointed images of Dr. Gragant, whom he describes as "a woman cloaked in shadows with a voice like the sound of metal scraping on metal, but also very soothing." He knows that she did something to him and his crew, but he doesn't know any specifics. He believes that he and his fellow pirates are being punished for their crimes, albeit in a very cruel manner. He begs for the PCs' help.

Zunar doesn't accompany the PCs into the labs and will come out of the storage shed only when the PCs assure him the way to New Elysium's space docks is clear. However, his ship, the *Stone Skipper*, is on the Material Plane. When he doesn't find it in the docks, he believes it was stolen or destroyed and he becomes despondent. He then refuses to leave that area. If the PCs destroy the shadow signal generator and open a portal to the Material Plane, they can bring Zunar along through with them, where the grateful sarcesian gives them a ride in his ship to wherever they like (see Concluding the Adventure on page 36).

**Story Award:** If the PCs rescue Zunar, award them XP as if they had defeated him in combat.

## C2. VEHICLE BAY (CR 10)

A small vehicle bay stands open to the asteroid's thin atmosphere, attached to a fully enclosed garage with no windows and only one door leading in. The floor of the vehicle bay is stained with oil and machine grease, while several unwieldy pieces of drilling equipment and asteroid crawlers hang on the walls.

This vehicle bay and garage is a copy of a structure built by the dwarven miners of Ulrikka Clanholdings when they worked on the asteroid. Dr. Gragant has left it pretty much alone, though she stored some



ZUNAR

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SCREAMS

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OF NIGHT

PART 1:  
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trifling objects in the garage as bait for the injudiciously curious (see Trap below).

Both the vehicle bay and attached garage are functional structures of the classic dwarven practical architecture. The sturdy door between the bay and the garage opens quietly with an easy pull. The garage contains a tool chest and a pair of workbenches that are devoid of tools. Except for constant dim illumination and lack of color, the whole area seems to be resistant to the taint of the Shadow Plane. The PCs can return to the garage as a safe place to rest when exploring the underground shadow labs, if need be.

**Trap:** The metal tool chest that stands opposite the door into the garage is trapped. Knowing this would be a tempting target for intruders who approached her shadowy lair, Dr. Gragant warded the tool chest with a magical trap. When anyone tries to open it, several lengths of barbed, shadowy chains appear and lash out at anyone standing close to the chest.

### CHEST OF CHAINS TRAP

CR 10

XP 9,600

**Type** magical; **Perception** DC 35; **Disable** Mysticism DC 30 (disrupt the ward)

**Trigger** touch; **Reset** 1 day

**Effect** shadowy chains +21 melee (8d10 C); multiple targets (all targets within 10 ft. of tool chest)

**Treasure:** Inside the tool chest, the PCs find four batteries, three high-capacity batteries, and two super-capacity batteries.

### C3. TUNNEL ENTRANCE (CR 11)

Behind the two freestanding buildings, a large white gate has been installed into the brittle, gray stone cliffs of the asteroid. The gate is controlled from inside, so a PC must succeed at a DC 32 Engineering check to open it from this

side. As the gate slowly rises into the stone over the course of 6 rounds, the PCs are attacked by the strange creature lurking nearby (see Creature below).

**Creature:** A shodrav, a beast native to the Shadow Plane, was drawn to the asteroid after Dr. Gragant's accident due to the tearing of the planar barriers between the two planes. Dr. Gragant keeps the creature fed as best she can, although she been toying with the idea of dissecting it to discover the source of its shadow jaunt ability if her current plan falls to pieces. In turn, the shodrav acts as a kind of guard dog and attacks anyone who tries to enter the tunnels unless Dr. Gragant accompanies them. It hides out in the hills above the entrance and attempts to ambush the PCs.

### SHODRAV

CR 11

XP 12,800

HP 180 (see page 59)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The shodrav maintains its superior position above the tunnel entrance for as long as it can, striking out with its shadow tendrils at any PC it can target.

**Morale** The shodrav attempts to flee when it is reduced to fewer than 30 Hit Points, jumping into the Material Plane. Depending on how long the PCs remain on the shadow asteroid, it might return later to attack them again.

**Development:** Once the PCs have entered the tunnel read or paraphrase the following.



THE PATIENT



Dim illumination from an unknown source casts shifting, unsettling patterns on the stone floor of this chamber, while the curved metal panels forming the walls and the ceiling seem distant, ephemeral, and unnatural, as if struggling to hold their shape. A large white gate exits to the south, and a smaller tunnel heads west, sealed by a smaller white door.

This chamber serves as the entrance to the series of labs that serve as Dr. Gragant's lair and a tribute to her twisted memories. A PC who succeeds at a DC 33 Mysticism check can sense that beyond this point, the area is composed of repurposed ephemeral energy and planar material under the control of a powerful being, and that things might not be exactly as they seem.

#### C4. HOSPITAL ROOM (CR 11)

This chamber looks like a filthy hospital room. The tiles of the walls and floor are cracked and broken, stained with blood and various fluids. A foul medicinal smell hangs in the air, and two badly damaged medical devices flank a central hospital bed, where a heavy white sheet conceals a misshapen lump. The machines spark, smoke, and leak fluids in shallow puddles. Various images projected on the walls show a teenage human girl. She often appears calm, but occasionally, the images show her weeping uncontrollably or laughing nervously. A female voice fills the room over a static-filled broadcast, chanting in a cold, disassociated manner, "Monday—two blue pills. Tuesday—the red ones. Wednesday—both red and blue. Thursday—just the green. Friday—the injection. Saturday—collect a sample. Sunday—holiday," before beginning again.

The first instances of true pain Lestana Gragant experienced were as a child in a hospital where her parents, both wracked with different terminal diseases, underwent painful medical procedures to try to save their lives. These memories have been concentrated and memorialized in this chamber, though they have been distorted and twisted.

A few moments after the PCs enter this room (but before they get a chance to remove the sheet on the hospital bed), the girl's voice turns to an angry shout: "No more doctors, no more procedures, no more pain!" The medical devices emit a cacophony of high-pitched beeps and electronic feedback, and the creature on the bed sits up, revealing its horrid form (see Creature below).

**Creature:** The Patient is a composite creature, looking like two grotesque adult humanoids in tattered hospital gowns were fused together, back to back, their skin cracked and flaking like dried chalk. Bones protrude from the skin of the limbs, their eyes burn with an inner light, and smoke leaks from their mouths. This terrifying being is a construct made from the shadowstuff of the Shadow Plane and wants to share its suffering with any living being who stumbles into this room.

#### THE PATIENT

CR 9

XP 6,400

LE Medium construct (magical)

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

**Perception** +17

#### DEFENSE

HP 145

**EAC** 22; **KAC** 24

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

**Immunities** construct immunities

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** slam +19 (4d6+15 B plus shift)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Being made out of the same shadowstuff, the Patient is partially connected to the medical device traps. It attempts to reposition PCs into the proximity of these traps to trigger them while avoiding the traps itself.

**Morale** The Patient fights until it is destroyed.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** +6; **Dex** +4; **Con** —; **Int** —; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +3

**Skills** Athletics +22

**Languages** Common (can't speak)

**Other Abilities** mindless, unliving

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Shift (Ex)** If the Patient hits with its slam attack, it deals normal damage, but if the attack roll successfully hits the target's KAC + 4, the creature also automatically repositions the target as a free action. The Patient can move the target an additional 5 feet for every 5 by which its attack roll exceeds the target's KAC + 4, but the target must remain within the Patient's reach.

**Traps:** Despite the fact that they are obviously malfunctioning, the two medical devices in this room look like those found in a typical hospital: they are built to monitor the life signs of the patient they are hooked up to, as well as provide intravenous fluid and medicine. However, closer inspection reveals several small oddities: wires that look like barbed chains, tiny fanged mouths at the ends of tubes, and layers of blood just under the monitor's glass.

When combat starts, roll initiative for the devices. A device can do nothing on its initiative count unless one of the PCs is adjacent to it, whereupon it explodes, scorching creatures adjacent to it with a blast of fire and shrapnel.

#### MEDICAL DEVICE TRAPS (2)

CR 7

XP 3,200 each

**Type** magical; **Perception** DC 30; **Disable** Engineering

DC 25 (shut down device) or Mysticism DC 25

(unravel shadowstuff)

**Trigger** proximity; **Init** +12; **Reset** none

**Effect** explosion (6d12 F); **Reflex** DC 17 half; multiple targets (all creatures adjacent to device)

SIGNAL OF  
SCREAMS

HEART  
OF NIGHT

PART 1:  
THE SHADOW  
OF VERCES

PART 2:  
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**Treasure:** A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check (or who simply looks under the hospital bed) discovers four nanite hypopods (three green and one red; *Starfinde Armory* 106).

**Development:** When the Patient is destroyed, the room suffers a power failure. Any medical device traps that haven't been triggered explode whether or not anyone is standing next to them. The girl in the images screams in agony, and the room is plunged into darkness. When light returns, the room contains only the emaciated remains of two humans stitched together on an old, rusting hospital bed, all wrapped together in chains and barbed wire.

## C5. BOARDROOM (CR 13)

This chamber appears to be a modern, corporate boardroom after a fire raged through it. Framed pictures hang on the walls, but their subjects are unrecognizable due to damage from the fire. A long table bisects the room, though its surface is charred and fragmented. Six statues of businesspeople in expensive suits cast from some pitted metal stand around the table, pointing at each other with furious expressions. A woman's voice ricochets around the room like an echo bouncing back and forth, growing louder and softer, "I'm sorry, I need more time. I can finish it, the research is sound. I just need more money—you have to be patient. You don't understand, you can't understand, please, listen, listen, LISTEN!"

Perhaps more than any personal failure, having to serve at the pleasure of Eclipse Innovations sent Dr. Gragant down a path of darkness. The status meetings she had to attend were like the rungs of a ladder, each one leading her further down a well of bitterness and resentment. Board members who barely even understood the point of her research questioned her methodology, suggested useless deviations, and disregarded her answers to pursue each other's inane suggestions all for the sake of being involved. Petty interpersonal politics and squabbling delayed simple approvals for days or weeks at a time.

When Dr. Gragant couldn't produce satisfactory results for the Eclipse Innovations' board, she turned to unethical scientific practices and dabbled with the dangerous mysticism that eventually led to the explosion that forever changed her destiny. She has had years to stew over these decisions, and part of her has become convinced that she might have accomplished her goal of eliminating pain if not for the board's meddling. However, it means little to her now, as she has established a new method to achieve a version of that goal. This room is a monument to those who stood in her way on the Material Plane.

**Creature:** Standing on the north side of the table between two statues is a figure that could almost be mistaken for human at first, though its featureless, pitted face and

insectile wings quickly dismiss that assumption. It is bent over a book that it studies in detail, tracing the writing with a claw. This creature, a shadowy fey known as a mementor, acts as a curator for Dr. Gragant's museum of painful memories, constantly tweaking and refining each experience. It knows the PCs are intruders here and attacks when they enter the room.

### MEMENTOR

CR 13

XP 25,600

HP 190 (see page 58)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The mementor casts *haste* on itself in the first round of combat. It then attempts to keep the table between itself and the PCs in order to use more of its spell-like abilities, especially *greater synaptic pulse* and *mind thrust*. If forced into melee combat, the mementor isn't afraid to use its claws.

**Morale** When reduced to 40 Hit Points or fewer, the mementor attempts to flee to area C8, where it then fights alongside the creatures there. It leaves its book behind.

**Development:** If the mementor is killed in this room, the boardroom table splinters and breaks in half, and the statues deteriorate into piles of rusty iron flakes in the blink of an eye.

The book the mementor was consulting is a detailed history of Dr. Gragant's life and a blueprint of sorts for these rooms, though it is written in a shorthand of arcane formulae unique to this mementor. The book's leather cover is warm to the touch, as if the object were alive. The pages are made out of a material almost as thin as spider webs, but they can still hold the unusual ink that seems to squirm in the dim light. A PC can understand the general gist of the tome, which appears to be written from an omnipresent point of view, by casting *comprehend languages* or *tongues* and succeeding at a DC 33 Mysticism check. Reading through the entirety of the book takes about 6 hours; though it might give the PCs some clues as to the nature of the rooms they are passing through, the text strains the mind, and the reading PC must succeed at a DC 18 Will saving throw or take 1d6 Wisdom damage.

## C6. EXPLODING LAB (CR 12)

Passing through into this room is like walking into an explosion in a laboratory frozen in time. Shattered glass vials and liquid hang in midair and arcs of electricity flicker from exploding machines. A flurry of half-burned papers covered in diagrams and formulae are suspended throughout the laboratory. The smell of ozone floods the room, and a constant, low rumble assaults the ears. Doors exit to the north and east.



Though her intentions were good, Dr. Gragant experienced a good deal of failure in her research. The mockery from her peers and the many public humiliations when her requests for research grants or public lectures were openly questioned eventually filled a deep well of anger and pain inside her. This ever-raging storm of impotent anxiety within her has been turned into another partially living display.

**Creature:** A haggard and mutilated figure stands in the middle of the room, its body wounded and bleeding from paper-thin cuts, its coat smoking from acid or chemical burns, and its arms run through with scalpels and glass. This is a snapshot of Dr. Gragant at her most frustrated, exploding with all the pent-up anxiety she was never able to release in life. The Failed Doctor is a mindless construct made from the shadowstuff of the Shadow Plane, and though it can speak Common, it does so only to vent Dr. Gragant's anger with accusations of sabotage and insults. It doesn't listen to reason and attacks any intruders who enter the room.

## THE FAILED DOCTOR CR 11

XP 12,800

LE Medium construct (magical)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +20

**Aura** slowing aura (10 ft., DC 20)

**DEFENSE** HP 155

**EAC** 23; **KAC** 24

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

**Immunities** construct immunities, electricity

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** slam +18 (2d10+11 B)

**Spell-like Abilities** (CL 11th; melee +18, ranged +20)

1/day—*overload systems* (DC 22),  
*rewire flesh* (DC 22)

3/day—*arcing surge* (DC 21), *discharge*  
(DC 21), *displacement, irradiate*  
(DC 21)

At will—*caustic conversion, inject nanobots*  
(DC 20)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The Failed Doctor begins by casting *displacement* on itself, and then it attempts to affect two random targets with *overload systems* and *rewire flesh*. It then relies on damaging spells to take out the PCs.

**Morale** The Failed Doctor fights until it is destroyed.

### STATISTICS

**Str** +0; **Dex** +3; **Con** –; **Int** –;

**Wis** +8; **Cha** +5

**Skills** Acrobatics +25

**Languages** Common

**Other Abilities** mindless, unliving

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Slowing Aura (Su)** A field of mystical energy that slows time to a crawl extends in a 10-foot radius around the Failed Doctor. A creature that enters this area must succeed at a DC 20 Will saving throw or be slowed, as per *slow*, for as long as it remains in the aura and for 1 round after it leaves.

**Trap:** As soon as the Failed Doctor begins to attack, one of the pieces of malfunctioning scientific equipment floating in midair behind it emits painful jolts of electricity each round until it is disabled or destroyed. Each round it targets one creature in the room at random (including the Failed Doctor, though the construct is immune to electricity).

A successful Perception check is required to notice which of the suspended devices is causing the surges of electricity. The surging device has EAC 21, KAC 25, hardness 5, and 125 Hit Points. It counts as an object for the purpose of spells (but has a bonus of +9 for all saving throws if needed).

## SURGING DEVICE TRAP CR 9

XP 6,400

**Type** magical; **Perception** DC 27;

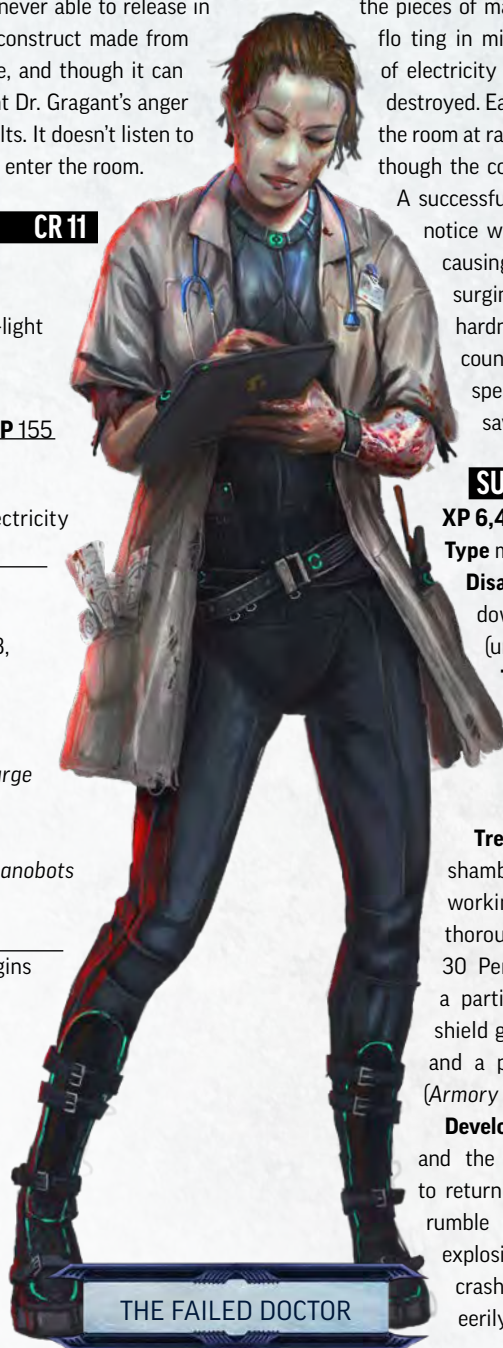
**Disable** Engineering DC 28 (shut down device) or Mysticism DC 28 (unravel shadowstuff)

**Trigger** location; **Init** +15; **Reset** 1 day

**Effect** surge of electricity +22 (8d12 E)

**Treasure:** Though the room is in shambles, the PCs can find a few working pieces of equipment with a thorough search and a successful DC 30 Perception check. Tucked away in a partially burned cabinet are a flas shield generator (*Starfinder Armory* 103) and a pair of synaptic link headbands (*Armory* 108)

**Development:** When the Failed Doctor and the trap are defeated, time seems to return to normal in the room. The low rumble resolves itself to be a massive explosion and all the floating debris crashes to the ground. It then becomes eerily quiet here.



THE FAILED DOCTOR

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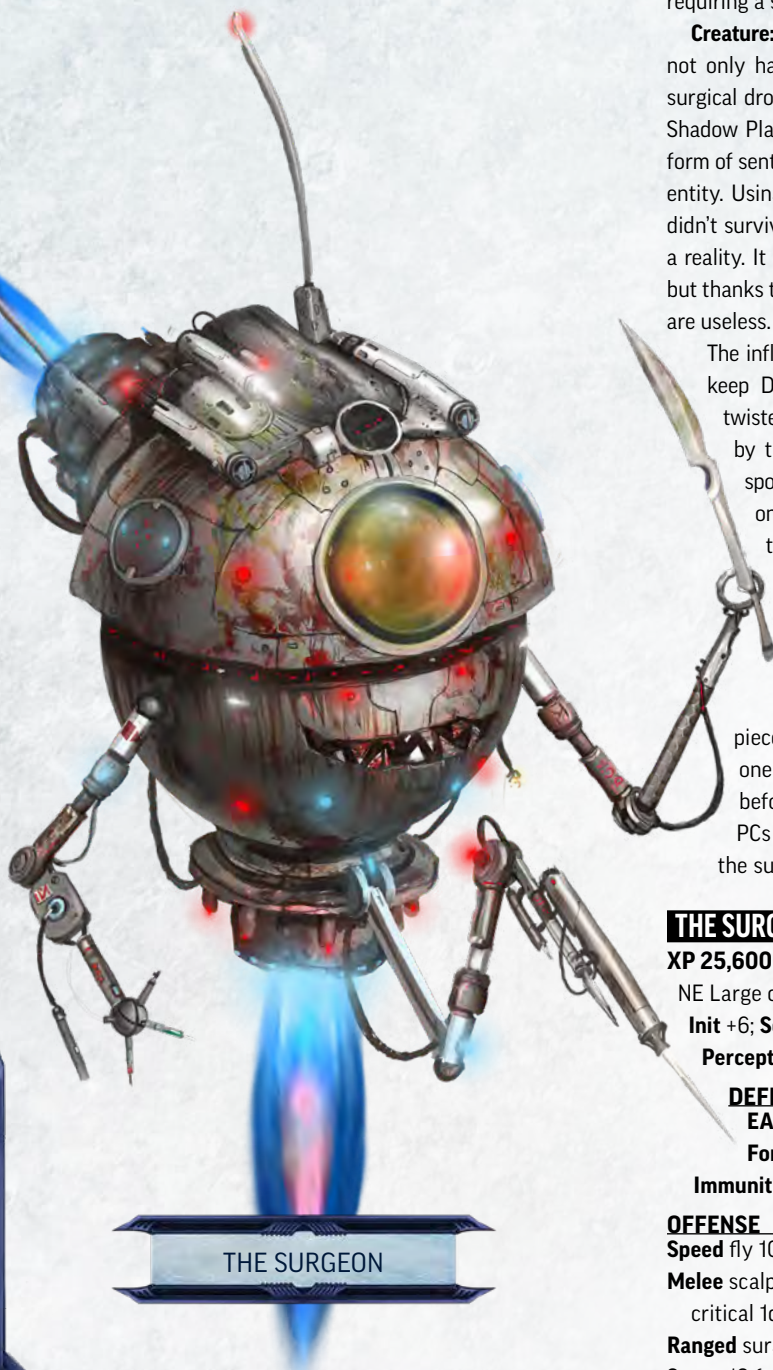
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## C7. SURGERY (CR 13)

The room looks like an operating theater, though some kind of biological life has infected the walls and floor, causing strange growths of flesh, skin, and organs. The room is brightly lit with overhead lights that flood the place with sterile, white illumination, though the room smells of rot and disease. A table on the north side of the room appears to be caked with layers of blood. Doors lead north and south.



THE SURGEON

In the months leading up to the fateful accident, Dr. Gragant grew more and more desperate to produce results with her research. Rather than give up, she became convinced that the answer would be found through procedures that were both magical and surgical. She committed fully to this path, performing dozens of operations on unwilling test subjects—sometimes without the use of anesthesia. When some her assistants began to blanch at such experiments, Dr. Gragant began to use a modified surgical drone to aid her.

The door to the north is locked from the other side, requiring a successful DC 40 Engineering check to open.

**Creature:** The rituals and incantations Dr. Gragant employed not only hastened her own downfall but also infected her surgical drone. The accident that trapped Dr. Gragant on the Shadow Plane pulled the drone along with her, granting it a form of sentience that made it think it was in part a biological entity. Using its surgical tools and the bodies of those who didn't survive the explosion, it attempted to make this belief a reality. It clumsily installed misshapen teeth into its ports, but thanks to its twisted understanding of anatomy, the teeth are useless.

The influence of the Shadow Plane and the energies that keep Dr. Gragant trapped within this complex further twisted the drone—now referred to as “the Surgeon” by the doctor and her velstrac allies—and this room, spontaneously forming masses of biological material on the walls, floor, and ceiling that are connected to the drone. The Surgeon spends its days performing useless procedures on this flesh, experiencing both the agony and the pleasure of exacting that pain.

When the PCs enter this room, they might mistake the Surgeon for a dormant, if grotesque, piece of equipment. The Surgeon waits until at least one PC is within reach of its scalpels and needles before striking. The Surgeon is very slow, and if the PCs don't wish to fight it, they might be able to flee the surgery after unlocking the northern door.

### THE SURGEON

CR 13

XP 25,600

NE Large construct (magical, technological)

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

**Perception** +28

#### DEFENSE

HP 210

**EAC** 27; **KAC** 28

**Fort** +10; **Ref** +10; **Will** +14

**Immunities** construct immunities

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** fly 10 ft. (Ex, clumsy)

**Melee** scalpel +25 (6d4+21 S plus distraction [DC 21]; critical 1d6 bleed)

**Ranged** surgical laser +23 (2d10+13 F; critical 1d4 burn)

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



**Offensive Abilities** anesthesia cone (15-ft. cone, see below, DC 21, usable every 1d4 rounds), distraction (DC 21)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The Surgeon sprays its anesthesia cone as often as possible in an attempt to knock out PCs. If the Surgeon is ever left alone in the room with only unconscious creatures, it drags one of them onto the table, where it can strap them down and begin a painful vivisection.

**Morale** The Surgeon fights until it is destroyed.

### STATISTICS

**Str** +8; **Dex** +6; **Con** –; **Int** +4; **Wis** +2; **Cha** +0

**Skills** Computers +23, Life Science +28, Medicine +28, Mysticism +23

**Other Abilities** unliving

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Anesthesia Cone (Su)** As a standard action, the Surgeon can spray a 15-foot cone of anesthetic liquid that seeps through targets' armor and into their skin. A living creature caught within the cone is sickened for 1d6 rounds unless it succeeds at a DC 21 Fortitude save. If a living sickened creature fails its save against this effect, it gains the fatigued condition, and a living fatigued creature is rendered unconscious for 6 hours on a failed save. An unconscious creature can be awoken by any amount of magical healing or by a spell or effect that removes the fatigued condition.

**Treasure:** A PC who searches the area and succeeds at a DC 32 Perception check discovers a cache of nanite hypodermics (three white and two green; *Starfinder Armory* 106) and two *mk III serums of healing* in a plastic crate under one of the surgical tables.

**Development:** Once the Surgeon is destroyed, the flesh material covering the room deteriorates rapidly, the biological matter sloughing off into disgusting piles of slimy goo

## C8. VENTILATION SHAFT (CR 13)

A massive, slow-spinning fan occupies most of the floor in this stark chamber. It creates a gentle draft here on which float the smell of fresh blood, a few wisps of gray smoke, and the faint, distant screams of unknown creatures. The fan is surrounded by four bulbous devices made of glass, metal, and plastic. The machines glow strangely from within, shifting from one end of the color spectrum to the other. A small door exits to the south.

The laboratory complex seemingly dead-ends here in at the top of a dark ventilation shaft. The sounds and smells emanating from the shaft are illusory, created by Dr. Gragant's interactions with the Shadow Plane. At a glance, the shaft seems bottomless, and dropping an item into it makes no sound. The fan blades move slowly and are easy to dodge,

though they make lowering a rope down the shaft impossible. A PC who flies, floats, or falls down the shaft for more than 100 feet must succeed at a DC 20 Will saving throw or become panicked with the gnawing certainty that the shaft goes on forever and if they don't leave it immediately, they will never be able to return to the surface. A PC who succeeds at this save can continue downward, but must attempt the same save every 100 feet they travel. The shaft is 200 feet deep and has smooth walls, requiring a PC to succeed at a DC 30 Athletics check to climb.

The machinery in this room are only decoration and have no actual function, a fact a PC can determine by succeeding at a DC 22 Engineering check.

There is a 10-foot-diameter hatch in the northeast corner of the room. This hatch opens onto a smooth, dark tube that leads 100 feet down to area **C9**. A successful DC 25 Athletics check is required to climb down the tube without falling.

**Creatures:** A pair of shodravs prowl through this room between the strange machinery. However, the presence of the PCs sends them into somewhat of a frenzy over the prospect of more interesting prey.

### SHODRAVS (2)

CR 11

**XP** 12,800 each

**HP** 180 each (see page 59)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The shodravs begin by striking with their shadow tendrils while moving within reach of the PCs. Each shodrav attacks a different PC.

**Morale** The shodravs fight hungrily until one is killed or both are reduced to fewer than 25 Hit Points. In either case, any surviving shodrav flees to the Material Plane using shadow jaunt.

## C9. MINING TUNNELS (CR 13)

The tube from the ventilation shaft area leads to a bunch of twisting tunnels in the stone of the asteroid. These tunnels should seem familiar to those the PCs explored in "The Diaspora Strain," but several subtle differences lead to a sense of unease. A PC who inspects any of the tunnel walls closely can see tiny striations in the rock that resemble lengths of chain. Though the passageways are illuminated by dim light, the PCs constantly see menacing shadows just around the next corner that disappear as they approach.

The tunnels are shifting and confusing, and to navigate them, a PC must succeed at a DC 34 Survival skill check or an appropriate Profession check (such as archaeologist or miner). If they fail, the PCs get a bit lost and turned around, allowing the velstracs hiding within the side rooms (see **Creatures** below) to ambush them.

**Creatures:** During her time on the Shadow Plane, Dr. Gragant has gained the loyal support of several velstracs, some of whom see her as a delightful new form of life and are interested in seeing how far she can take her plans. The two

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heretics and their pet vespers hounds here are eager to fight any intruders in brutal confrontation, seeking no quarter and offering none in return.

### HERETICS (2)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

HP 125 each (see page 60)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The heretics remain at range, firing their laser rifles at the most vulnerable-looking PCs.

**Morale** The heretics fight to the death.

### VESPERS HOUNDS (2)

CR 10

XP 9,600 each

HP 165 each (see page 61)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The vespers hounds use their slip through the shadows ability to appear amid the PCs and begin attacking with their claws, usually making full attacks unless a particular PC is difficult to hit. In such a case, a vespers hound targets that PC with its prison of chains ability.

**Morale** The vespers hound fight until they are killed.

## C10. END TRANSMISSION (CR 15)

This large, square space has twenty-foot-high ceilings, and the walls are tiled with five-foot-wide square steel panels. Several glass cylinders line the walls in regular intervals, each filled with a dark fluid in which floats unmoving forms that defy classification, only parts of the contents visible at a time as they bob gently within. The center of the room holds a thirty-foot-wide pool of thick, opaque liquid. A totemic obelisk rises from a small square island in the center of the pool, a disquieting structure of living flesh and machine parts wired together. Skinned faces are stretched over monitors, their lips moving without making a sound. Limbs reach out from tangles of cables, and whole disembodied torsos hang twitching from transmitters.

The mechanical monstrosity in this room is the generator and prime transmitter for Dr. Gragant's shadow signal. See Hazards on page 35 for more information on how it affects the room. The liquid in the pool is 10 feet deep, and the light level under the surface of the pool is complete darkness. Though it might look strange and dangerous, the liquid is harmless.

The secret door to the south can be discovered with a successful DC 35 Perception check, though certain notes on the signal generator's computers hint at its existence (see Development on page 35).

**Creatures:** Dr. Gragant, wearing a white lab coat with dark leather armor underneath, stands on the eastern side of the pool. She appears human at first glance, but she is a unique

outsider, and her supernatural abilities will soon become apparent. She idly holds a dagger in her left hand while examining the readings on her computer screens. Read or paraphrase the following.

The woman looks up. "At last, you're here," she calls out. Her voice conveys a cold but human callousness with hint of a machinelike tone underneath it. "You've made a mess of my research project, but then again, the signal tends to incite violence at first. If you live with it long enough and accept the changes, that's when your new body can show you what it's capable of. I can help you make that leap—to become immune to pain like I am. You've suffered so much already. Let me free you, and together we can transmit the signal across the galaxy. What can be more philanthropic than to free all worlds from the tyranny of pain itself?"

If the PCs haven't yet figured out that this is Dr. Lestana Gragant, she introduces herself at this point and repeats her offer. The PCs might simply attack her and the signal device at this point, or they might agree to her proposal as a bluff to get closer to her. However, she demands proof of their sincerity.

"Before your glorious ascension, you must provide a sacrifice. You've seen what I've had to suffer through in order to get here, and I understand your mortal reluctance to truly lose something of meaning and taste the horror of loss. But it is necessary. All I require is that you cut off your nondominant hand. What you receive in return will more than make up for that loss. If you're unwilling to make that small sacrifice, then I'll settle for the soul of any one of your number. Just pick someone and murder them. It doesn't matter who you choose."

A PC who honestly accepts Dr. Gragant's offer immediately succumbs to shadow corruption and becomes an NPC. Saving that PC from Dr. Gragant's influence is beyond the scope of this adventure, but killing the doctor and destroying her signal generator should be the start of such efforts.

Should the PCs refuse or attack Dr. Gragant, she attacks at range with her spells and commands two of her "subjects" to come forth: a trio of vespers hounds that were hiding within the pool.

### VESPERS HOUNDS (3)

CR 10

XP 9,600 each

HP 165 each (see page 61)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The vespers hounds leave the pool by using their slip through the shadows ability.

Each attacks a different PC, hoping to keep them in one place to allow Dr. Gragant to use her spell-like abilities unhindered.



**Morale** These beasts are the most loyal to Dr. Gragant's cause and fight to the death.

## DR. LESTANA GRAGANT

CR 13

XP 25,600

LE Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful)

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +28

### DEFENSE

**EAC** 26; **KAC** 27

**Fort** +12; **Ref** +12; **Will** +18

**Defensive Abilities** insubstantial; **Immunities** cold;  
**Resistances** electricity 15

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** ultrathin dagger +23 (4d4+13 P)

**Offensive Abilities** look of pain (60 ft., DC 19)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 13th; ranged +20)

1/day—*synapse overload* (DC 24), *unwilling guardian* (DC 24)

3/day—*dimension door*, *mind thrust* (4th level, DC 23),  
*resilient sphere* (DC 23), *rewire flesh* (DC 23),

At will—*arcing surge* (DC 22), *displacement*

### TACTICS

**During Combat** Dr. Gragant begins combat by using *displacement* on herself. She targets any obvious melee fighters with *unwilling guardian* and sets them to protecting her from other melee fighters while casting *dimension door* to stay out of range of anyone trying to pin her in place. She targets a PC injured by a vespers hound with *mind thrust* or *synapse overload* to finish them off and uses *resilient sphere* to trap the PC who is causing her the most trouble.

**Morale** Dr. Gragant fights until she is reduced to 0 Hit Points, though this might not mean her destruction (see Development below).

### STATISTICS

**Str** +0; **Dex** +6; **Con** +2; **Int** +8; **Wis** +4; **Cha** +2

**Skills** Bluff +23, Computers +23, Life Science +28,  
Mysticism +28

**Gear** estex suit IV (gray force field [20 HP], mk 3 electrostatic field, *mk 1 spell reflector*), ultrathin dagger

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Insubstantial (Su)** Dr. Gragant's corporeal form occasionally flickers into insubstantial shadow. She has a 50% chance to ignore (treat as a normal hit) extra damage and critical hit effects from a critical hit from any weapon, unless that weapon has the *ghost killer* fusion or can otherwise affect incorporeal creatures normally.

**Look of Pain (Su)** As a standard action, Dr. Gragant can cause terrible pain in a living target that she can see. If the target fails a DC 19 Fortitude save, it is stunned for 1 round. This is a mind-affecting pain effect. A creature that succeeds at its saving throw against this effect is immune to it for 24 hours.

**Hazard:** The signal generator in the center of the room is connected to Dr. Gragant's growing power on the Shadow Plane. The mystical core of the device was formed during the accident that trapped Dr. Gragant, and she has been modifying it in gruesome ways over the past decade. This is the source of the shadow signal that has plagued the PCs throughout this Adventure Path, and destroying it is the only way the PCs can hope to cleanse the stains on their souls. While the signal generator is active, if a hound or Dr. Gragant scores a critical hit against a PC, that PC must attempt a saving throw against their shadow corruption. This effect can be suppressed for 1d3 rounds if a PC succeeds at a DC 30 Engineering check made as a standard action while adjacent to the signal generator. The signal generator has EAC 21, KAC 25, hardness 20, and 100 Hit Points. If the PCs destroy the signal generator while Dr. Gragant is still alive, it re-forms 2d4 rounds later.

**Development:** When defeated, Dr. Gragant lets out an extended scream of pleasure and ecstasy, as she finds an ultimate joy in the agony of death. She collapses to the ground, and if the signal generator hasn't been destroyed, wisps of shadowstuff begin coalescing around her fallen form. A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Mysticism check realizes that Dr. Gragant and the device are connected, and that destroying both is the only method to purge their own shadow corruption. If the PCs don't destroy the signal generator, Dr. Gragant resurrects in 1 hour, at full health and with her full complement of spells.

The physical statistics of the signal generator are provided in the Hazard section above, but the PCs can also cause the signal generator to overload and destroy itself by succeeding at three consecutive DC 34 Engineering checks, each of which takes 10 minutes to attempt.

While one PC fiddles with the signal generator's mechanical parts, another PC can examine the device's computer systems to learn more about Dr. Gragant's plans and history. With a successful DC 28 Computers check, the PCs can find the detailed journal she kept on the computer, which will fill the PCs in on any information from the Adventure Background they might not yet know (and possibly give them context for the encounters the PCs have experienced up to now). This journal also hints at a nearby secret laboratory where Dr. Gragant is conducting another, more personal experiment, away from the prying eyes of her outsider allies. This grants the PCs a +5 circumstance bonus to find the secret door that leads to area C11.

If a PC succeeds at a second DC 28 Computers check while perusing the system, they can download the schematics of the signal generator onto their comm unit, granting a +4 circumstance bonus to attempts to overload its system. This information also reveals that destroying the signal generator will cause the pool of liquid to transform into a temporary portal to the Material Plane. This portal will last for 4 hours and lead back to New Elysium. While this isn't long enough

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for the PCs to fully rest up, it does give them an opportunity to poke around area **C11** or fetch Zunar before they lose their chance to escape the Shadow Plane.

## C11. HIDDEN LAB

A seemingly conventional medical lab stands in stark contrast to the strangeness of the other areas in the rest of the facility. Near the center of the room rests a shiny, gray metal hemisphere approximately five feet in radius, with no apparent way of opening it. The hemisphere's segmented panels reflect the sterile surroundings. Various monitoring devices, computers, and screens line the walls.

This chamber holds Dr. Gragant's most personal experiment, and perhaps her most disturbing secret—one she kept hidden even from her Shadow Plane allies out of fear they would want her to destroy it. Even after her transformation, some small part of her saw the road of depravity that lay ahead. She still could not deny her lifetime of commitment and proceeded with the creation of the shadow signal, her humanity weakening with every passing day. However, in the back of her mind, she wondered whether, had she grown up without the specter of pain hanging over every moment of her life, she could perhaps have become someone else.

This sweet echo of a daydream eventually transformed into a jagged knot. Dr. Gragant's scientific mind would not allow for this potential scenario to remain unexplored, so she began to grow clones from the human parts of her DNA that still existed. With the help of the mementors, she distilled much of her early memories and implanted them in the copies, whom she aged to 13 years. She then placed them inside the hemisphere—a complex virtual reality simulator—to live out accelerated versions of various scenarios: ones in which her parents did not die, or died naturally and quickly in less painful ways and she was adopted by loving family or foster parents. She varied the parameters and permutations, but each invariably came back with some form of pain or another.

Her clones encountered pain in the form of heartbreak, rejection, loss, and loneliness. Even lives that went on for decades and were full of love and companionship invariably faced pain at the end, as existential dread began to set in and partners and friends began to die. Rather than accept pain as part of the human condition, Dr. Gragant kept tweaking the parameters, trying to find a perfect life without pain.

Dr. Gragant has run thousands of these experiments, disposing of each clone as it descended into pain and grief. One last clone remains within the dome, only recently inserted into the program. This 13-year-old version of Lestana Gragant believes herself to have lived a normal life

without parents at all and is waiting to be taken into the custody of a foster care system on Absalom Station.

The PCs can learn all this by examining Dr. Gragant's notes on the computer terminals here. The computers here are unsecured and require only a DC 10 Computers check to access. Once a PC has this access, they can watch the terabytes of video memory showing the thousands of clones that lived and died before this one. A termination protocol is readily available, which will reduce the clone within the hemisphere to a protein sludge that can be used to grow the next clone. A PC can also release the clone, though freeing clone from the simulation without jarring her mind requires a successful DC 28 Computers check.

The 13-year-old Lestana Gragant is pleasant and has a sharp, analytical mind. Temporarily gaining her trust requires a PC to succeed at a DC 25 Diplomacy check while offering a reasonable explanation of where she currently is and what has happened to her. While telling her the truth momentarily shocks her, she does appreciate the PCs' candor; this grants a +2 circumstance bonus to the Diplomacy check to earn her trust. If the PCs succeed, they can escort the teenage Lestana Gragant back to the Material Plane, where they can find a foster care organization on Absalom Station or most other Pact Worlds willing to care for her. Alternatively, they can become her guardians and raise her themselves. She shows a keen interest in the field of science and engineering and could eventually become a valued member of any crew. However, she does occasionally have nightmares about a shadowy version of herself calling her to perform dark deeds.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With the signal generator destroyed and Dr. Gragant dead, the small island in the center of the pool in area **C10** sinks under the surface of the liquid, which begins to churn and bubble. After a moment, the pool becomes still, though instead of reflecting the room, it shows an image of Green Fields on New Elysium, the carnage that occurred in "The Diaspora Strain" still present. A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Mysticism check can sense a new aura surrounding the pool, recognizing it as a one-way portal that can take them back to the Material Plane.

The PCs (and whoever they bring with them) can step into the pool, which transports them back to the asteroid resort. The signal-infected guests and staff have all perished, and while the facility is disturbing, it is no longer dangerous. Zunar can direct the PCs to his starship, the *Stone Skipper*, docked at the resort's bays. If the PCs failed to save Zunar, they can easily find the sarcesian-style freighter and get its engines running by succeeding at a DC 22 Engineering check.





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Either way, the PCs can travel wherever they want in the Pact Worlds, though they probably want to return to Verces to find their own starship parked where they left it.

The PCs might want to keep the facts of their ordeal to themselves, or they might want to go to the authorities to report what happened at New Elysium. While they likely had little luck in that regard in the past, they are no longer pressed for time and can wait for the Stewards (or another policing organization) to fully examine the asteroid resort. Though many are skeptical, the Stewards eventually believe the PCs' story and ensure them they don't have to fear prosecution for their actions on New Elysium or on Verces during their investigation of Eclipse Innovations. The Stewards do insist, though, that the PCs submit to a few rigorous physical examinations and suggest that the PCs speak with qualified therapists to learn how to cope with their experiences.

However, if Paradise Resorts gets wind of the incident and the PCs' return, they ask them to remain quiet about their experiences so they can open New Elysium once again. If the PCs corroborate a fanciful tale of an attack by space pirates that led to all the fatalities, they are recognized as heroes for driving the marauders off and are paid handsome sums of credits that will keep them in living in luxury for the rest of their lives. However, they will have to live with the guilt of lying to the victims' families, though some PCs

might take comfort in the belief that the truth would be much more traumatizing to hear.

The final side effect of stopping Dr. Gragant is that the PCs are purged of their shadow corruption... if they wish to be. By stepping through the portal to the Material Plane, each character feels a heavy weight being lifted from their chest as the shadow corruption washes away like dirt in a shower. They lose all their manifestations as their bodies and souls return to normal. They cease noting unusual sensations and stop having disturbing nightmares. Depending on how far their corruption progressed, they begin to feel connected to the world again and their emotions are no longer deadened. Such a PC might even be temporarily overwhelmed by this resurgence of feelings.

Alternatively, if a player seems interested in having their character retain the gifts of their shadow corruption, you can describe how that PC is visited in the night by a humanoid figure draped in rustling chains. The mysterious entity offers the PC a chance to "explore the limits of their physical form" in a whispery voice. The only thing the figure asks in return is that the PC forsake all their close relationships and to accept a tiny magitech implant into their brain. If the PC agrees, they feel a sudden, sharp pain in the base of their neck as the figure nods in approval. They then regain their manifestations. Where such a bargain takes that PC in the future is up to you!





## CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

"On behalf of Eclipse Innovations, I apologize to those directly affected by the malware event on New Elysium, as well as to their friends and families. We found the problem, and we eliminated it. To facilitate the healing process, we're covering all expenses incurred due to this incident. Paradise Resorts has also reached out to offer complimentary stays to affected individuals and guests they would like to accompany them. Our customers can also rest assured that the new version of the Penumbra Operating System will meet their needs, without fail."

—Kreshnara Jaan, VP of Public Relations for  
Eclipse Innovations



The Signal of Screams Adventure Path ends when the PCs defeat Dr. Gragant and end her signal. But as in any horror scenario, the defeat of one horror can lead to another and to more adventure.

**Different Screams:** Dr. Gragant's laboratory contained a number of alternative experimental carrier signals, each of which produces a different psychological shift related to pain, causing happiness, love, joy, camaraderie, and so on. Unknown to others, Dr. Gragant set up a failsafe that only she could deactivate. A short time after her defeat, the failsafe goes off, releasing these experimental signals in a cascading series transmitted to various infospheres. The PCs must trace the digital code of each signal to keep Dr. Gragant's experiments from running amok, producing various horrors across the Pact Worlds.

**Newer Elysium:** As a settlement for their pain and suffering, the PCs receive the deed to New Elysium. Though they can use the facility as they see fit, they also become responsible for restoring it to its previous state. All the pain and suffering that occurred there left scars. Spirits of those who died due to Dr. Gragant's signal linger, and it's up to the PCs to help these unquiet spirits find rest. In addition, it's anyone's guess what dangers remain in the Ulrikka mines underneath the facility. If the velstrac Teodhor survived, or even if he didn't, the PCs might find darker residents have set up shop in the resort.

**Overzealous Cleansing:** The corruption unleashed by the Signal of Screams became so widespread that the forces of good dispatched the angel Kallis to cleanse this taint from the galaxy. The PCs handled the problem first, but the signal left its marks on those who encountered it, turning some to evil. Kallis, bent on eradicating the corruption completely, seeks out and destroys anyone affected by the signal, including the PCs. If the PCs don't want to stop Kallis with violence, they might have to appeal to higher authorities in the celestial bureaucracy to rein in the angel. PCs who do resort to force might need to justify their actions to other celestials sent to discover Kallis's fate.

**Shadow Hacktivists:** The PCs receive a message from the hacktivist Chop Collective, located in Cuvacara, asking the PCs to help them aid victims of the fallout of the Penumbra Protocol. However, the PCs soon discover that it's not the Penumbra Protocol's aftereffects that are plaguing those whom the Collective wishes to help, but instead a group of kayals taking advantage of the chaos. Members of the Collective aren't equipped to deal with extraplanar threats, so it's up to the PCs to hunt down the kayals' nest on the edge of the Shadow Plane and either eliminate or placate them so their victims can begin to find some peace.

**Shadow Incursion:** Velstracs from the Shadow Plane raid the Material Plane, kidnapping and transforming colonists and other isolated groups to continue learning more about how to gain glimpses of the sublime. The PCs first face the mystery of these disappearances, but upon discovering the

fiendish truth, they must find the incursion's source. A mighty velstrac named Astri is using harvested flesh to build herself an army and augment her body. The only way to stop her ascension is to face her within a velstrac enclave she controls.

**Shadowed Star:** A large chunk of the Shadow Plane has exchanged places with parts of a star system in the Vast. The Material Plane star and some of its attending planets have been replaced by their shadow counterparts. When the PCs investigate, they discover the system's only habitable world, home to a nascent society of sapient aliens, is slowly dying in the dark and facing domination from a group of shadow giants—and it is the giants who control the artifact that caused this shift to occur. The PCs must assault the giants' fortress and destroy or deactivate the artifact to return all aspects of both star systems to their rightful planes.

**Skein of Corruption:** Shadow corruption still lingers in the PCs' souls. To free themselves, the PCs learn they can travel to a dead exoplanet on the Shadow Plane. Karn, a spirit who dwells there, teaches the PCs a ritual that allows them to sequester the corruption from their souls in the fles at the surface of their body, which can then be cut away. After several torturous cycles of treatment and healing, the afflicted PCs are well. However, they discover that Karn is using the scraps of corrupted flesh to form a physical body it can use to travel the Shadow Plane. This mysterious being seeks and harvests more corrupted skins to increase its power and knowledge.

**Velstrac Virus:** Dr. Gragant's signal had unintended consequences. On a macro scale, it caused sapient species to break with reality and embrace pain. But on a micro scale, it mutated a normally harmless virus that is now infecting people on Verces. The virus affects the central nervous system, changing the host into a bizarre cross between a velstrac and a zombie. Most of the infected have been reduced to a state where they are little more than ravenous beasts. Some, however, retain a low cunning, believing that everyone they see embraces pain as pleasure. These higher-minded infected lead their lesser kith to maim and torture, thinking only that they are helping their victims. To stop this budding plague, the PCs must obtain a pure sample of the mutated virus so an antigen can be produced to save as many infected beings as possible.

**What If the PCs Lose?** If Dr. Gragant isn't stopped, she eventually manages to activate her Signal of Screams and unleash her corrupting influence on the Pact Worlds. The transmitter's activation opens a portal to the Material Plane, freeing Dr. Gragant to leave her laboratory on the Shadow Plane. She uses her fiendish might and influence to leverage newer and more dangerous technologies, as well as recruit velstracs to her cause as a self-made exemplar of their kind. If left unchecked, she pursues her goal for personal and universal enlightenment, pushing the galaxy toward a dark age of violence as more and more sapient beings embrace pain as pleasure.

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# CORPORATE CORRUPTION

**A**t least several weeks after they defeat Dr. Gragant, PCs receive a message from Kreshnara Jaan, Vice President of PR for Eclipse Innovations. The CEO of Eclipse, Pret Ayinger (N agender verthani) wants to meet with the PCs to discuss a sensitive security breach in Eclipse systems. Kreshnara has been sent to contact the PCs because, ultimately, this issue can only push the corporation's image further down, especially following its recent debates.

The PCs receive a retainer to return to Cuvacara on Verces and meet with the CEO. There, Ayinger sees the PCs in a lush rooftop apartment at the top of one of the city's skyscrapers. The meeting is private, off the books. Several bodyguards accompany the highly augmented Ayinger, who isn't sure they trust the PCs after all that has happened.

Ayinger tells the PCs that a rival company called Bonus Chance, a gambling syndicate, stole the source code for Keys to Elysium, the technology Dr. Gragant's Signal of Screams subverted. Ayinger isn't sure how Bonus Chance plans to use the software, but they are certain Bonus Chance can't be trusted with this harmful tech. If the PCs press, Ayinger reveals the stolen software is still infused with a subdued version of Dr. Gragant's carrier signal, which Eclipse kept "for study and safekeeping."

The PCs are hired, with a generous retainer and the promise of further payout, to infiltrate the Bonus Chance headquarters in Cuvacara and inject the rival's system with a worm designed to hunt down copies of the errant software. If the PCs push hard enough, Ayinger agrees to destroy Eclipse's copies of the corrupted code as part of the PCs' payment. In any case, the CEO warns the PCs that if they are captured, Eclipse Innovations will deny any involvement in the plot.

Ayinger suggests the PCs use the public tours that Bonus Chance offers as cover to scout their facility. If they agree, the PCs pose as tourists, and they can learn about the layout and security measures. If they aren't careful during this operation, however, they might tip off Bonus Chance security to be on the lookout for corporate espionage. Alternatively, the PCs can take whatever opportunity they have to sneak away from the guided tour to infiltrate the building. In any case, they learn that Bonus Chance keeps its most important data on upper levels in the office of the company's CEO, Asher-34.

Asher-34 first thought that the Eclipse Innovations technology might prove to be a useful addition to his gambling dens scattered across the galaxy. A savvy technocrat, Asher-34 began to personally dissect the software when it arrived, at which point the embedded carrier signal sparked shadow corruption in the evil android. Until now, he had embraced his artificial nature

and subdued physical sensations as weaknesses, but the corruption revitalized his living side, allowing him to feel physical sensation through his synthetic frame for the first time in many decades. Sensation was a revelation. Since acquiring the corruption, Asher-34 has been experimenting with different sensations, his systems interpreting pain as pleasure. He has begun testing his tolerances, scraping off his artificial flesh and applying heat, cold, and acid to portions of his body.

In addition, the android has begun trials using his employees. The Bonus Chance complex is essentially an arcology, a self-sufficient facility designed to minimize ecological impact and allow employees live onsite in a way that requires them to rarely leave. Asher-34 has been recruiting employees to see exactly how their bodies can be improved. He has also begun to hear the whispers of velstracs, driving him to seek the same sort of perfection.

To keep any news from escaping, Asher-34 initiated an automated employee ID initiative, which provided the opportunity to embed control devices in the right temples of all employees. These employees act mostly normal but have occasional lapses where they stare off into space or move about almost mindlessly, especially if asked about unusual goings-on in the facility. PCs might notice something is off about the employees with whom they interact and can make the connection through roleplaying and Sense Motive checks (DCs in the 20 to 30 range) about the bizarre behavior. It takes 1 minute to examine an employee and a successful DC 30 Medicine check to find the embedded device. A successful DC 30 Computers, Engineering, or Medicine check is enough to identify the true nature of the "ID" device.

The security forces in most of the facility are little challenge for seasoned adventurers, but the players should be reminded that these are people doing their job and it is the PCs who are breaking and entering. Once it becomes clear there has been a security breach, hardened soldiers take over security operations, such as the mercenary commandos and mercenary technomancers found on page 175 of *Starfinder Pact Worlds*, along with tougher security constructs, such as the AHAV on page 8 or robots on pages 94–95 of the *Starfinder Alien Archive* (advanced in CR), or the golems on pages 66–67 of *Starfinder Alien Archive 2*.

On the upper levels near Asher-34's office and quarters are secure labs containing pain-racked employees on whom he has experimented. Also in this horrific place are complicit scientists, monstrous beings (perhaps using the rebuilt template graft found on page 60 of *Starfinder Adventure Path #5: The Ruined Clouds*), and Asher-34's elite personal security force, his enforcers (fanatically loyal LE mercenaries with the shadow-marred template graft; see page 41).



Security countermeasures activate as soon as a threat is detected, and the labs have strange hybrid devices, such as higher-level traps from page 413 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*, that could threaten interlopers.

When the PCs reach their goal, they have to hold the computer room long enough to inject the worm. To escape, they must face Asher-34 and a few of his lackeys. It's also possible that Ayinger either informs the proper authorities or pulls a double-cross, sending in a black-ops team to finish off the PCs. In either case, these developments happen after the PCs implant the worm in Bonus Chance's core system.

## ASHER-34

CR 16

XP 76,800

Male android envoy

NE Medium humanoid (android)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 90 ft., low-light vision;

**Perception** +29

### DEFENSE

HP 280 RP 6

**EAC** 30; **KAC** 31

**Fort** +14; **Ref** +19; **Will** +16; +2 vs. disease, mind-affecting effects, poison, and sleep

**DR** 5/good or silver; **Defensive Abilities** fast healing 10;

**Immunities** pain effects; **SR** 22

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 60 ft.

**Melee** gravity battleglove +26 (5d10+18 B)

**Ranged** advanced gyrojet pistol +28 (4d12+10 B; critical knockdown) or  
parallax optical laser +28 (4d6+20 F; critical burn 2d6)

### STATISTICS

**Str** +2; **Dex** +7; **Con** +2; **Int** +5; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +10

**Skills** Bluff +34, Computers +34, Diplomacy +29, Engineering +29, Profession (corporate professional) +29, Sense Motive +34

**Languages** Akitonian, Castrovelian, Common, Elven, Triaxian, Vercite

**Other Abilities** constructed, envoy improvisations (improved get 'em, hidden agenda, improved hurry, not in the face), flat affect, upgrade slot (*mk 2 magic resistor*<sup>AR</sup>)

**Gear** bespoke echelon fashion, gravity battleglove with 1 battery (20 charges), advanced gyrojet pistol with 20 mini-rockets; **Augmentations** backup lobe<sup>AR</sup>, cloaking skin<sup>AR</sup>, *mk 2 force soles*<sup>AR</sup>, parallax optical laser<sup>AR</sup>, speed suspension (complete)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

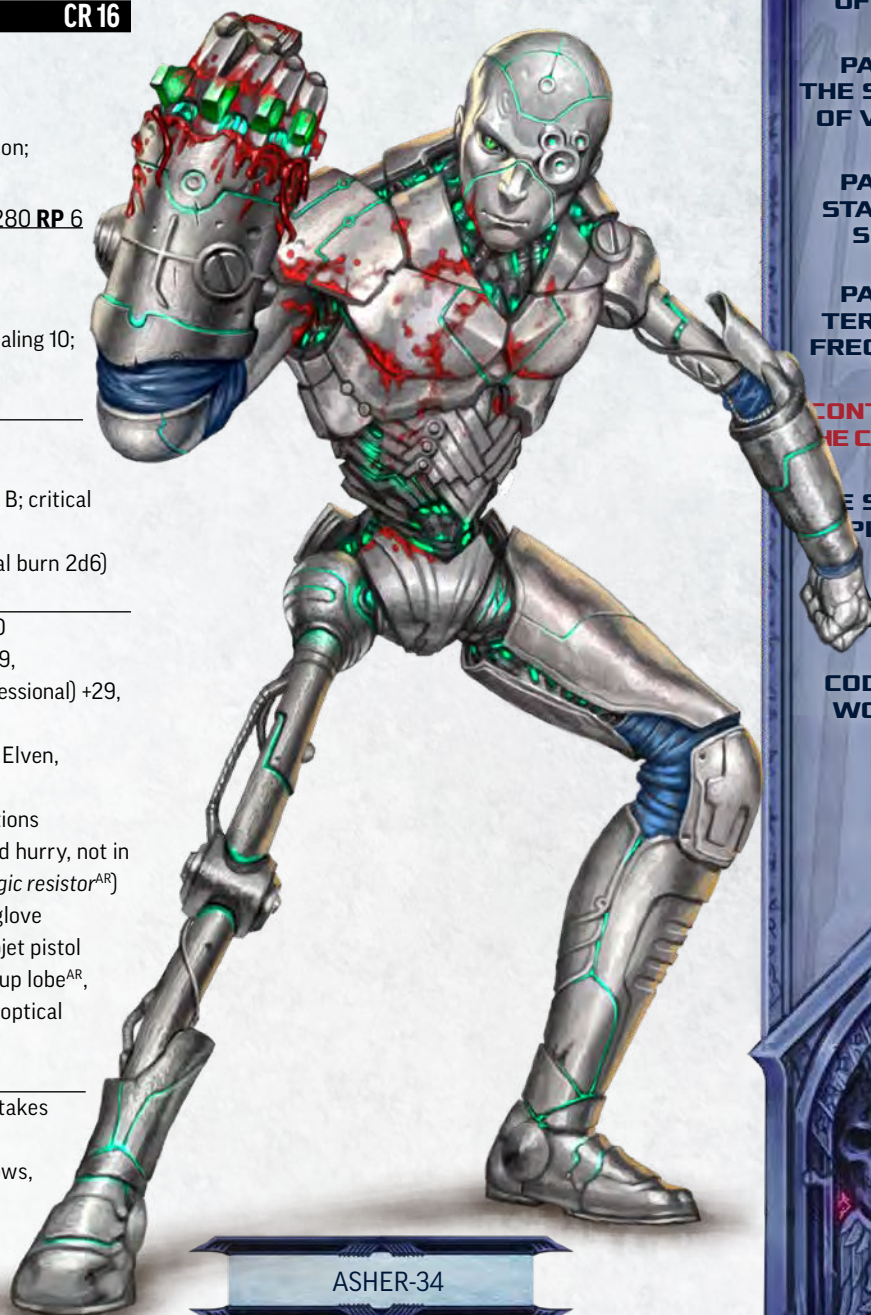
**Pain Inspiration (Su)** The first time Asher-34 takes Hit Point damage in a given encounter, for 1 round he can roll attack rolls, saving throws, and skill checks twice and use the better result. He can do so again first time he drops below half his Hit Points in a given encounter.

## SHADOW-MARRED TEMPLATE GRAFT (CR 3+)

The process that forms a shadow-marred creature can happen to a member of almost any species. Use the following template graft to create such a creature of any CR.

**Alignment:** Alignment changes to any evil.

**Traits:** Darkvision 60 ft. (or increased by 30 ft.), low-light vision; DR 5/good or silver; fast healing equal to half the creature's CR; immune to pain effects; pain inspiration (see Asher-34's statistics).



ASHER-34

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# NIGHTMARE INVITATIONS

**F**rom his palace on the Shadow Plane, the Fortress of Absolute Transformation, the velstrac demagogue Vevelor had taken an interest in Dr. Gragant's work with pain. So many beings on the Prime Material balk at the idea of discomfort, much less agony. Gragant's work in helping those on the Material Plane accept pain as the pleasure it is fascinated the velstrac. Sadly for him, she was not worthy of ultimate ascension at his side: after all, she was defeated.

Vevelor observed Gragant up to her downfall at the PCs' hands, and learned their identity when he watched them fight the doctor. Vevelor became fascinated with the PCs, especially any among them touched with shadow corruption, as anyone who could bring about the ruin of one so innovative as Gragant must be worthy of attention and, possibly, of ascension in her stead.

As the PCs move on from Gragant's destruction, Vevelor reaches out to attempt to convert them into his followers. He starts by offering tempting rewards in their dreams. Vevelor can provide small boons to those who revere him, such as staving off the final doom of shadow corruption or changing manifestations to those a new disciple prefers, especially those that lead to velstrac transformation. If a PC accepts willingly, Vevelor honors them with gifts and tutelage, all but ensuring their final descent into darkness.

Offers Vevelor makes are deeply personal and horribly tempting. Take what you know about each player and PC, and craft Vevelor's proposals to match. Vevelor's bargains also center around his core conceits, such as ultimate freedom and lack of patterns. Vevelor despises uniformity.

If a PC refuses these overtures three times, Vevelor instead inflicts nightmares on them. This ability works like the *nightmare* spell (*Starfinder Adventure Path #10: The Diaspora Strain* 52).

However, in addition to that spell's effects, a PC who fails the initial saving throw treats their maximum Hit Points and Stamina Points as 10 lower until able to take an undisturbed 8-hour rest. In these dreams, the PCs are tortured, losing that which is most dear to them. They see what they could have been at Vevelor's side in a vision where they appear as their perfect ideal, compared to the ruined, imperfect creatures they become after Vevelor's tortures.

At some point, probably when the PCs are weak and exhausted from lack of rest, Vevelor gives up his attempts to influence them. He resigns himself to losing the PCs as disciples and instead sends his servant Ylenka, the Contemptuous Freedom, to destroy them.

Like Vevelor, Ylenka disdains boundaries and set rules. She believes that true liberty is unconstrained by the limits of the physical form. She toys with the PCs in a similar manner to Vevelor's; however, her methods are not as focused as the demagogue's.

Though she also sends nightmares, hers center on dissolution through misused autonomy. In each nightmare, the PCs prove unworthy of their potential, despairing in failure after failure.



YLENKA



Ylenka's powers allow her not only to travel between the Shadow Plane and the Material Plane, but also to peer from one plane to the other. She spies on her targets, learning their patterns and waiting until they stay in one location for a time. There, on the parallel site on the Shadow Plane, she sets up a "training facility," a macabre torture chamber with a few of her velstrac allies on guard. (If need be, this base is on a velstrac starship.) She moves into the Material Plane when one of the PCs is alone or asleep. If she can, she kidnaps PCs one at a time. When she does so, she tortures her victim, preaching the creed of the velstracs and the value of learning from Vevelor. Ylenka uses *modify memory* to ensure her captives remember their "lesson" but not their abduction or subsequent return. When possible, she returns her subject to the exact spot they were in prior to the abduction, such that the entire experience seems like more nightmares.

Ylenka avoids a direct confrontation until she has taught multiple lessons. The PCs might need to stalk and corner her to confront her directly. Even then, if she drops to fewer than half her maximum Hit Points, she flees, recovers, and returns later to continue her tormenting tutorials.

## YLENKA, THE CONTEMPTUOUS FREEDOM CR 18

XP 153,600

LE Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar, velstrac, lawful)

**Init** +10; **Senses** blindsight (vibration) 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, *true seeing*; **Perception** +31

**DEFENSE** HP 350 RP 6

**EAC** 32; **KAC** 33

**Fort** +16; **Ref** +18; **Will** +20

**DR** 15/good and silver; **Defensive Abilities** share pain; regeneration 15 (good and silver); **Immunities** cold, fear effects, nonlethal damage, pain effects

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft., fly 90 ft. (Su, perfect)

**Melee** chain claw +31 (6d8+20 S plus grab; critical bleed 6d6)

**Multiattack** 3 chain claws +25 (6d8+20 S plus grab; critical bleed 6d6)

**Ranged** chain barbs +31 (8d6+18 S plus entangled [DC 25]; critical bleed 6d6)

**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (20 ft. with chain claws)

**Offensive Abilities** agony of defiance, evisceration, unnerving gaze (30 ft., DC 25)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 18th)

1/day—*interplanetary teleport*, *shadow walk*

3/day—*control machines* (DC 24), *mind thrust* (5th level, DC 24), *psychic surgery*, *unwilling guardian* (DC 24)

6/day—*modify memory* (DC 24), *telekinesis* (DC 24)

At will—*mind probe* (DC 23), *nightmare* (DC 22),

*rewire flesh* (DC 23), *telepathic bond*

Constant—*true seeing*

### STATISTICS

**Str** +2; **Dex** +6; **Con** +2; **Int** +5; **Wis** +8; **Cha** +11

**Skills** Acrobatics +31, Bluff +36, Intimidate +36,

Mysticism +31, Sense Motive +36

**Languages** Common, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

**Other Abilities** planar peering, shadow phase

**Gear** freebooter armor V (mk 2 *spell reflector*, *teleportation unit*<sup>AR</sup>, vibration sensors<sup>AR</sup>)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Agony of Defiance (Su)** Whenever a creature succeeds at a Will save against one of Ylenka's spells or abilities, negating its effect, the creature takes 15 nonlethal damage. This is a mind-affecting pain effect.

**Chain Barbs (Su)** Ylenka can make ranged attacks with her chain barbs with a range increment of 60 feet and a maximum range of 300 feet. These weapons have the entangle special property.

**Evisceration (Ex)** Ylenka is capable of performing swift surgical operations upon targets that are helpless or that she currently has grappled. Against such a target, any hit with Ylenka's chain claws counts as a critical hit with the severe wound critical hit effect (although she can choose the bleed effect instead) with a save DC of 25. If Ylenka actually scores a critical hit against such a target, she rolls the damage three times instead of twice, and the save DC increases to 27. When Ylenka uses this ability to wound a target, the lost flesh immediately grafts to her body, restoring 3d8+11 Hit Points and removing one condition affecting Ylenka.

**Planar Peering (Su)** As a full action that provokes attacks of opportunity, Ylenka can peer across the boundary of a plane she is on into the coterminous area on another plane. For instance, she can use this ability to peer from the Ethereal Plane or Shadow Plane into the connected area of the Material Plane, or vice versa. While she peers into a conterminous plane, Ylenka's attention is focused on that plane. She is only dimly aware of her actual surroundings and takes a -10 penalty to Perception checks related to occurrences there. By using a full action each round to concentrate, Ylenka can maintain this ability indefinitely.

**Shadow Phase (Su)** Ylenka can oscillate her form between the Shadow Plane and Material Plane while moving, allowing her to pass through material objects other than corporeal creatures. She must start and end her turn outside any such object. In addition, attacks made against her while she's moving have a 20% miss chance.

**Share Pain (Su)** Whenever a creature damages Ylenka, she can spend 1 Resolve Point to reduce the damage by 20, up to the attack's total damage. If Ylenka does so, the creature that dealt the damage must succeed at a DC 25 Will save or take the damage Ylenka didn't take due to using this ability. This is a mind-affecting pain effect.

**Unnerving Gaze (Su)** A creature that succumbs to Ylenka's unnerving gaze becomes confused for 1 round as its mind floods with the possibilities of the past, present, and future, unbridled by restraint. This is a mind-affecting effect.

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## THE SHADOW PLANE

"Never again. When I signed on for this mission, I thought it would be a simple job: travel to the designated place and threaten some people with our guns, maybe shoot them if they got out of line. Easy. I was wrong. I should have known something was up when a Kuthite ship delivered us to our target. Let me be clear, the reason I surrendered had nothing to do with you. Your security is mediocre, at best. I knew we'd have to use that ship to return, and there's no way I'm going back to whatever hell-dimension the Kuthites pulled us through."

—[REDACTED], [REDACTED] mercenary,  
upon surrendering to Frozen Trove  
security on [REDACTED]



Just as most creatures cast a shadow, the Material Plane has a dark, connected reflection in the Shadow Plane. This plane, itself buffeted in the Ethereal Plane's mists, serves as a barrier against and a material expression of the Negative Energy Plane, a realm of entropy and dissolution. Because of its nature, the Shadow Plane is a twisted mirror of the Material Plane, bearing a likeness of most Material regions and worlds but distorted in form. What the Shadow Plane reproduces emphasizes darkness, tedium, decay, and abnormality.

## EXPLORATION

The Shadow Plane has consistent properties that distinguish it from other planes. Unless indicated otherwise in the following sections, elements of the plane function as they do on the Material Plane.

## LIGHT

Bizarre dim illumination covers the Shadow Plane, its source never apparent and always unstable. This changeable gloom creates shifting shadows everywhere. Light sources can brighten this dimness, but the range of any light source is halved. This half-light pervades in outer space, which seems like a starless void of perpetual shadow. But this appearance is false; in fact, dark stars burn in the distance, shedding faded twilight on the planets that circle them.

## MAGIC

Shadow effects (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 270) are enhanced on the Shadow Plane. When you cast such a spell on the plane, treat your caster level as 2 higher. Conversely, spells that use or generate light or fire are impeded within the Shadow Plane. To cast such a spell, you must attempt a caster level check ( $DC = 20 + \text{the spell's level}$ ). Failure indicates the spell fails to function, but you still expend its spell slot. On a success, the spell functions normally within the other limitations of the Shadow Plane.

## NAVIGATION

Like the Material Plane, the Shadow Plane is an immeasurable domain, expanding out in every direction. For every area that exists within the Material Plane, a Shadow Plane reflection exists, although these versions might be in slightly different places and unrecognizable as the counterparts they are. However, the Shadow Plane continually shifts as it flows into other planes of existence. Creating a precise map of the plane is difficult, despite the presence of landmarks.

Certain magic, such as *shadow walk*, allows creatures to take advantage of the plane's shapable nature. Because of this aspect of the plane, before the advent of the Drift, some species flirted with using the Shadow Plane as a means of achieving faster-than-light travel. The shadow drives of velstracs and those who serve Zon-Kuthon were among the most prevalent of these technologies. Some remain in use to this day, especially

## SHADOWTONGUE

Speaking creatures on the Shadow Plane often know Common. The Shadow Plane also has a twisted echo of that shared language, called Shadowtongue. Natives and longtime inhabitants of the Shadow Plane typically know Shadowtongue. Velstracs are a notable exception to this general rule. Although velstracs have resided on the Shadow Plane for eons, they are transplants from Hell. Many velstracs hold themselves above a language that has no part in their heritage and that, they claim, is younger than their species. Velstrac telepathy also affords them the luxury of eschewing polyglotism.

among velstracs. Such engines transition a starship from the Material Plane to the Shadow Plane, replicating the effects of the *shadow walk* spell on an interplanetary scale.

Starships that use shadow drives travel at incredible speeds, though they are slower than vessels that use Drift engines, especially over vast distances. In-system shadow-drive travel takes  $1d4+2$  days. For other shadow-drive travel, use the Drift travel times found on page 291 of the *Core Rulebook*, but double the results. Shadow drives grant no special advantage for travel to Absalom Station, as shadow drive travel is based on how far a vessel actually is from the station.

## HAZARDS

On the Shadow Plane, dangers unseen on the Material Plane lurk in unexpected places. Some of these hazards exist in shadow space, putting even those who think themselves safe inside starships at risk.

**Sapping Nebulae:** Darker clouds in the darkness of shadow space, small regions of sapping nebulae can doom travelers with apathy and life-sapping negative energy. These hazards are charted in well-traveled areas of shadow space, allowing astrogators to avoid them. However, in the Vast of shadow space, the draining energies of sapping nebulae can penetrate starships and cause living creatures to give up on life itself. This ennui doesn't kill directly. Most victims die of their own apathy and detachment from reality.

### SAPPING-NEBULA ENNUI

**Type** disease (contact); **Save** Will DC 15

**Track** mental and physical (special); **Frequency** 1/day

**Effect** no latent state; the victim takes all penalties from progressing on both tracks; when physically impaired, the victim must succeed at a Will save rather than Fortitude save to act, and failing the save results in the victim becoming dazed for 1 round rather than nauseated. The worst possible physical stage is debilitated, and the worst possible mental state is disassociated.

**Cure** The victim must benefit from two successful castings of *remove affliction* within 1 minute.

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**Voidboils:** The Shadow Plane's proximity to the Negative Energy Plane can be inimical to life. Normally, this influence is, at its worst, a source of negative emotions and a lack of vigor in living beings. However, the relationship between these two planes can result in direct leaks of negative energy called voidboils. These leaks seem to be attracted to the living, especially living creatures native to the Material Plane. Voidboils take various forms and can occur even on starships traveling shadow space. A voidboil can be predicted, however, by the dark, tumorlike growths that appear on objects moments before the phenomenon erupts.

Voidboils are hazards that can have almost any CR. Such a hazard usually has a radius equal to 5 feet × the hazard's CR. The following stat block shows a typical voidboil.

### VOIDBOIL

CR 8

XP 4,800

**Type** magical; **Perception** automatic; DC 32 Mysticism to identify the initial dark tumorous growths in time (including on reset); **Disable** Mysticism DC 27 (shunt the negative energy back to its plane)



IXCALIAD

**Trigger** proximity (life, 40 feet); **Reset** each round, for 1d4 rounds, the voidboil has a 25% chance of resetting.

**Effect** negative energy (40-foot-radius spread); 10d6 damage to living creatures (Fortitude DC 18 half); undead regain 5d6 Hit Points.

## DENIZENS

The Shadow Plane has a peculiar ecology, much of it a twisted version of that found on the Material Plane. This generality is especially true about simpler life forms, such as vermin and plants. Flora and fauna of the plane emphasize its entropic nature, so fungi and similar agents of rot are especially prominent. Sentient species also exist here, some native and others as interplanar exiles or immigrants. The following creatures are some of the Shadow Plane's most common or well-known sapient species. Countless other beings dwell on the plane, many still awaiting discovery in the depths of shadow space.

### D'ZIRIAKS

A species of humanoid termites, d'ziriaks have a civilization on the Shadow Plane, with numerous hive cities. Each d'ziriak has a unique and intricate glowing pattern across their exoskeleton, and the light from this display is unaffected by the Shadow Plane's gloom.

Similarly, d'ziriak cities rise from underground layers in illuminated spires that act as beacons in the sinister dimness that pervades the Shadow Plane. Most d'ziriaks are content to remain in the city into which they were born, but these creatures are willing to converse and trade with travelers to their native plane. They craft and sell intricate luminous items, from the practical or martial to the merely decorative. This light art extends to d'ziriak starships, which have radiant plating and ample lighting to better detect hidden threats within shadow space.

### IXCALIADS

The ixcaliad species of outsiders seems to have arisen during the Gap. Even their name remains a mystery—no Shadow Plane native remembers or has records of where these creatures come from. Lacking a standard form, an ixcaliad is an assembly of gelatinous goo binding together an assemblage of eyes interconnected by violet veins. An ixcaliad has no fixed form and is instead capable of reshaping its body into different configurations depending on the task that lies before it. Ixcaliads appear in regions of the Shadow Plane to pursue inscrutable ends that involve exploration and confrontation, and these mysterious errands occasionally have violent outcomes. To date, no one has managed to successfully communicate with this species, learned what their goals are, or determined why ixcaliads appear when and where they do.



## SHAES

Humanoid-shaped outsiders of wispy shadowstuff, shaes claim they were once humanoids who have since transcended fixed form. They consider themselves superior to beings that have not similarly ascended and wear masks and form-fitting clothing to interact with other humanoids, who might otherwise have a hard time discerning a shae. Some shaes use their mystique to gather humanoid followers who hope to learn the shae secret of transformation into living shadow. Shaes once had a primary citadel within the Shadow Plane, but this place disappeared with Golarion during the Gap. Most shaes now live within a shadow star system they call Sheth, where few non-shaes are allowed. From there, shaes travel shadow space in elegant starships, seeking new pleasures and novelties.

## WAYANGS

Ancient historical records state this species of small humanoids once thrived on the Shadow Plane before undertaking an exodus to the Material Plane. After the Gap, however, it was revealed that several tribes of wayangs had returned to the Shadow Plane and, apparently, created a civilization on Yutanah, a hidden world within the Vast of shadow space. Wayangs still express their spiritual beliefs through ritual scarification and bleaching their gray skin, and they love bright clothing and jewelry. Unlike their reclusive ancestors and kin, though, some wayangs now travel the stars on both the Shadow and Material Planes in elaborate festival starships crafted to house and amuse guests on long-term voyages. Travelers looking for safe and entertaining passage through shadow space can rarely do better than wayang festival ships, so wayangs charge a premium for the privilege.

## OTHER DENIZENS

Numerous other species exist within the Shadow Plane. Kayals (see page 57) have spread throughout shadow space, like their human counterparts on the Material Plane, to become one of the most populous sapient beings in the shadow version of the Pact Worlds. Svartalfars (*Starfinder Adventure Path #11: The Penumbra Protocol* 60) were exiled long ago from the fey First World, and they now dwell on the Shadow Plane, hoarding wealth and knowledge, especially of their former home. Shadow giants (see page 56) also inhabit the Shadow Plane, and they have long relied on alliances with evil humanoids to advance their technology and standing.

The most infamous of the Shadow Plane's inhabitants are the velstracs, who left Hell eons ago for the darkling plane. They have far more interest in those who dwell on the Material Plane than in the native species of the Shadow Plane. These flesh artists travel shadow space and the Material plane in baroque vessels, hunting for victims and dark enlightenment. For more information on the velstracs,

see "Fiends of Shadow" in *Starfinder Adventure Path* #11. Examples of these fiends appear in *Starfinder Adventure Path* #10 and #11, as well as in this book and on pages 128–129 of *Starfinder Alien Archive* 2.

Alongside the velstracs on the Shadow Plane are the mutilated. Once a dead mortal's soul has been judged, it becomes a being known as a petitioner, an outsider with only vestiges of its former personality and memory. Those souls deemed to be aligned with the values of velstracs travel to the Shadow Plane and are known as the mutilated. Through torment, velstracs aim to transform the mutilated into new velstracs. Those that fail in this transformation are used by velstracs as labor, currency, and raw material for fiendish objects and pets

## LOCATIONS

With the advent of Drift travel, the breadth of the galaxy now lies open to exploration. But in the Shadow Plane, such exploration has long been available. The distances between stars are vastly reduced thanks to the plane's shifting nature, and in fact pre-Drift space exploration led to the discovery of countless worlds. The dangers of such travel, however, mean that Material Plane exploration is already outpacing previous discoveries within and through the Shadow Plane.

## ABBAY OF NEVERS

Led by the elder velstrac Aroggus, the velstracs left Hell ages ago. They traveled to the Shadow Plane, where Aroggus built the Abbey of Nevers. The abbey is a physical structure partly composed of shifting shadowstuff and filled with phantasmagoric pleasures and nightmares. Although velstracs have spread across the Shadow Plane and beyond, Aroggus remains, in spirit form, in his refuge. He can take physical form in various constructs within the abbey, preferring an ornate suit of powered armor some consider to be the prototype of the *kyton bloodsuit* (*Starfinder Armory* 78), but the reality is that the abbey itself is Aroggus's body and mind.

## ATHARAXUM

A Shadow Plane copy of a remote world in the Material Plane, Atharaxum is a place of deep black oceans. Jellyfish-like alien fauna float within these repressive seas, each providing dim beacons for explorers to follow. Underwater complexes of transparent aluminum and hardened glass lie hidden within the depths, administered by shaes. These mysterious beings specialize in genetic engineering and the development of biotech, a science incompatible with their own shadowy forms. Transports sporadically pick up cargo from these facilities, taking sealed containers to drop-off points across the Shadow Plane. Only Atharaxum's shaes know the goal of their research, but it's clear that these shaes require a secluded locale to keep their work concealed from outside eyes.

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## DEPOSITORY OF TRUTHS

Disciples of Eloritu maintain the Depository of Truths in the center of a portion of shadow space where six stellar anomalies, each a stable portal to the Negative Energy Plane, exist in synchronous orbit with one another. The depository is a space station surrounded by magically reinforced outer shielding, and the scholars and crew who operate it rarely admit outsiders. Countless relics, and much veiled information pertaining to magical secrets and specific magical rituals, reside within the depository. Many of the texts and items kept within the depository are dangerous, and the facility's staff remains vigilant against intrusion; the priestly technicians of the depository are committed to preserving the secrets in their charge against any breach in security. A final failsafe exists that will deactivate the station's stabilizing fields and allow the entire complex to tumble into one of the nearby portals. It's believed that the Depository of Truths is one of the few places in the universe to hold secrets unavailable on the Material Plane's fabled library world of Athaeum.

## EXECUTIONERS' NEST

Traversing the open expanse of shadow space, the *Executioners' Nest* is a capital-class starship that rarely docks. Worshipers of Lao Shu Po run the starship as a training ground for assassins. Elder assassins use communion with their deity and other divination methods, as well as direct observation, to select candidates from across the Shadow and Material galaxy alike. Potential assassins receive an invitation to a rendezvous on the Shadow Plane. Those who accept the invitation and survive the rigorous journey face a final test before induction into the assassin clan. Meditative seminars expanding on the best practices for infiltration, poisoning, sabotage, and undetectable murder are routine within the confines of the ship's interior. In rare circumstances, the *Executioners' Nest* and its crew of master assassins use derivative shadow engine technology to travel

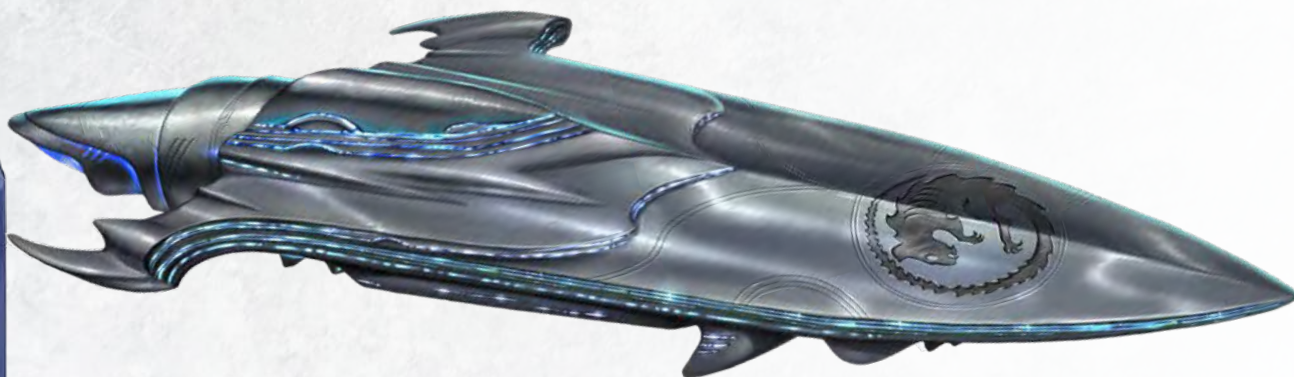
to other planes of existence via *plane shift*, deploying in force on missions of extreme importance to Grandmother Rat's interests.

The one-eyed **Silent Strike** (N male ysoki operative) commands the *Executioners' Nest* and is the most notorious of its master assassins. The venerable ysoki teaches only three students every 6 years, and his teachings are thought to be some of the most brutal murder techniques known to mortal followers of Lao Shu Po. Upon completing their instruction, the students receive a final mission to assassinate their two fellow apprentices. The winner of this final task is allowed the honor of returning to whatever life they wish, now further enriched by Silent Strike's teachings. It is known among the ship's residents and students that Silent Strike is in possession of a leaking water barrel, which nears empty. The rumor is that once the barrel empties, Silent Strike will call upon his surviving students and orchestrate a contest to assassinate him. Whoever succeeds takes the title of Silent Strike and control of the *Executioners' Nest*.

## GLACIAL STAR

Luminous suns are few and far between in shadow space, but the Glacial Star is one. This blue-white sun is a navigational beacon, known for a pulsating light that most starship sensors can spot even in shadow space and use as a guide. Upon closer inspection, though, the star bears little resemblance to the burning masses found on the Material Plane. Instead, the Glacial Star is a sun transposed from the Material Plane and frozen by some now-forgotten magical event. The resultant ice is harder than diamond, though light still flows through, simultaneously refracted by the icy surface and bounding through countless tunnels that lead into the star's interior.

At the heart of the Glacial Star, among portals to the Positive Energy Plane, is a permanent portal to the Plane of Fire, the result of powerful wish-crafting orchestrated by efreets of the Dominion of Flame. The frozen sun acts as a gulag of sorts, where political prisoners and other dissidents



EXECUTIONERS' NEST



are sent to live out their days. Warden **Jhezzala** (LE female efreeti soldier) runs the prison with a literal iron fist, a prosthetic forced upon her for some previous failure. Jhezzala knows her position is just a glorified exile, but she enjoys her position of power, meting out punishment upon those who defy her strict laws. The warden has spent the last few decades preparing for an eventual return to her home plane, offering access to the planar gateway at the heart of the star for exorbitant prices.

## JUBILANT ARGOSY

The flotilla of the *Jubilant Argosy* is one of several wayang festival fleets that ply the silent void of shadow space.

Under the leadership of **Iurgilli "Gilli" Kivot** (N gender-flui wayang envoy), the "party armada's" wayangs hold ceaseless and sometimes ritualistic revelries within their ships, and these events somehow repel the depressing atmosphere and native predators of the Shadow Plane. Paying passengers are welcome, and goods from the Material Plane also command a high price here. However, despite the relative safety of wayang vessels, some passengers have gone missing. The *Jubilant Argosy* is also notorious for inconsistent manifest reports. Many believe that the missing people become part of the ongoing festivals, willing or otherwise. Conspiracy theorists posit the wayangs use ritual sacrifice to maintain the security of their fleet though occult means.

## NEEDLE COPSE

The Needle Copse is a shadow fey hideout located on the Shadow Plane counterpart of Castrovel. The site specifically covers the wilderness of the Material Plane's Ukulam continent. A refuge for fey seeking to escape the rampant rise of technology, the Needle Copse is a vast, gray-leaved forest replete with thorny underbrush; some of these thorns are over a foot in length. Shadow-infused fey, particularly svartalfars, caper within the copse and maintain dozens of minor settlements. Thanks to unique magic, the copse enhances non-neutral colors, making them glow vibrantly. Blood that falls to the forest floor, for instance, forms a glowing trail that malicious fey can follow.

## PALACE OF BOUNDLESS ELEVATION

The Palace of Boundless Elevation is home to Quareez, the Razored Word, a mighty and alien velstrac in service to the even more alien velstrac Anyalaritus, who rose to power during the Gap, possibly even to the status of demagogue. Countless structures cover the surface of the moon, which orbits a world, named after the Razored Word, in the Shadow

Plane's Vast. Inanimate material on the moon is mutable, allowing Quareez to control the Palace of Boundless Elevation at a microscopic level. The moon also glows, despite the dimness of the nearby star. To the velstracs, mutilated, and creatures held captive on the world below, the shifting nature of the moon manifests as the facial tics of a maimed face continually staring down at them. Quareez collects the greatest of the mutilated and other hostages, those most willing to pursue the velstrac way, and transitions them into new velstracs using methods known to only the Mouths of Anyalaritus (see pages 50–51 of *Starfinder Adventure Path #11: The Penumbra Protocol*).



SHADOW ABSALOM CREST

## SHADOW ABSALOM STATION

As Absalom Station travels the orbital path of old Golarion in the Material Plane, Shadow

Absalom Station does the same on the Shadow Plane. Shadow Absalom isn't a similarly unified structure, though. Instead, the station is an amalgam of space debris, asteroids, and collided starships that somehow form a functional living space. How exactly they do so is a mystery lost to the Gap. The station got its name after the Gap from reports of its counterpart on the Material Plane, and as an homage to the pre-Gap Shadow Plane city of Shadow Absalom. In the same way that its counterpart on the Material Plane serves as a major hub, this space station is a primary center for trade and relative safety on the Shadow Plane.

Similar to the Shadow Absalom of old, the central mass of Shadow Absalom Station is a vast orb of radiance contained within a cathedral of blackened stone. This light, known to locals as the Glare, is thought to actively repel the spreading miasma of the nearby realm of Xovaikain. The Glare also provides a unique effect in that creatures passing through it return to their plane of origin at the location where they first entered the Shadow Plane. The advent of the Drift has muddled this formerly reliable form of travel. Now, a few of those who pass through the Glare end up in a habitable section of the Drift instead of on their home plane.

The Cultured Assembly, consisting of the wealthiest trade moguls of the station, regularly convenes to govern Shadow Absalom Station. Most of these council members are business-savvy and excessively rich kayals or the leaders of d'zirak hive corporations. Other beings fill out the remainder of the roster, including a coven of hags, a shadow dragon, several intelligent undead, a few outsiders from the Shadow Plane and various other parts of the Great Beyond, and some creatures native to the Material Plane. The Cultured

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Assembly ensures the stability of the station by deciding on everything from mutual defense to taxation. Assembly plutocrats ensure laws are enforced, but they favor trade, making the station a good place to acquire goods that might be less than legal elsewhere.

### SHADOW ABSALOM STATION

LN space station

**Population** 1,200,000 (55% kayals, 22% d'ziriaks, 11% Material Plane humanoids, 6% intelligent undead, 6% other)

**Government** plutocracy (the Cultured Assembly)

**Qualities** cultured, financial center, insular, notorious, technologically average

**Maximum Item Level** 20th

### SHADOW VESKARIUM

The worlds of the Veskarium exist within the Shadow Plane just as the Pact Worlds have their own shadowy counterparts. Individual worlds are dark mirrors of their Material Plane versions, but with space travel, some inhabitants have spread across the plane. Monochromatic creatures resembling the Veskarium's skittermanders are notorious for infesting starships that ply shadow space.

These hairless mockeries bear none of the drive for communal teamwork or willingness to help that the Material Plane's skittermanders possess. Instead, these creatures have more in common with fey gremlins, combining boundless energetic activity with the belief that only by hindering others can you truly help them.

### URZHASH-DUUR

In the distant past of a forgotten planet, the rulers of that world employed giants to perform extensive underground mining. They delved too deep. A cataclysm ripped the planet apart, leaving it a shattered husk only half its original size. This event destroyed the Material Plane world, but its Shadow Plane version survives as a collection of neighboring planetoids and asteroids tumbling through shadow space. Shadow giants (see page 56) rule this debris. Though the giants once sought war and conquest, their leader **Kahagan Duur** (LE male shadow giant) made his people rich by broadcasting blood sports throughout shadow space. Extensive training grounds and gladiatorial combat zones cover the world, and some of them span multiple asteroids in order to allow for three-dimensional battle games; combatants come from all over the planes to prove themselves against Shadow Plane natives. The giants, now grown indolent off the success of their media empire, are content to focus their efforts on improving the appeal of their gladiatorial vids.

### XOVAIKAIN

This place was once the mountain-fortress of the deity Zon-Kuthon, based on shadow Golarion. After Golarion's disappearance, Xovaikain expanded to become a planet-sized nebula of darkness that occupied the same orbital space that old Golarion once occupied on the Shadow Plane. Tendrils of smoky shadow reach into the surrounding space, while fierce but muted lightning storms rage deep within. Inside the greatly expanded Xovaikain, devout mortal Kuthite followers, shadow giants, and other terrifying creatures pay homage to Zon-Kuthon or hunt across motes of tortured landscape, including vile asteroids and artificial structures tethered in the clouds of madness. Xovaikain's tendrils have



SHADOW MYSTIC



numerous areas that act as sapping nebulae. Only Shadow Absalom Station prevents the expansion of Zon-Kuthon's fluid domain, since the light at the station's center acts as some sort of gatekeeper or ward.

## PLAYER OPTIONS

Just as the Negative Energy Plane bleeds onto the Shadow Plane, the Shadow Plane affects the Material Plane. Ever since the planes first settled into their current configuration, the Shadow Plane's energies have seeped into the Material Plane and affected its inhabitants through supernatural infections, tainted bloodlines, and the like. Some natives of the Material Plane have learned to harness shadow magic, some taught by visitors from the Shadow Plane and others through an innate connection to shadow from some other source.

### MYSTIC CONNECTION: SHADOW

As a mystic, you've lived your life in and around the shadows and learned to cover yourself in them as a second skin. Others shun the shadows, afraid of what lurks in them, but you are that lurker. Knowledge can be found or hidden within the shadows, and you're adaptable enough to use either option to suit your needs. Whether you hide your secrets or strike from safety, your bond with shadows grants you the supernatural ability to bend them to your will.

**Associated Deities:** Eloritu, Lao Shu Po, Zon-Kuthon

**Associated Skills:** Intimidate and Stealth

**Spells:** 1st—*gloom mote*<sup>1</sup>, 2nd—*paranoia*<sup>2</sup>, 3rd—*umbral tendrils*<sup>1</sup>, 4th—*shadow jump*<sup>1</sup>, 5th—*shadow body*<sup>2</sup>, 6th—*shadow walk*

<sup>1</sup> These spells appear in this article.

<sup>2</sup> These spells appear on page 52 of *Starfinder Adventure Path #10: The Diaspora Strain*.

### SHADOW INFUSION (SU) 1st Level

You gain darkvision with a range of 60 feet. If you already have darkvision, its range increases by 30 feet. In addition, if the concealment that allows you to attempt a Stealth check to hide comes from dim light or darkness, you can double the bonus you receive from your channel skill mystic feature. Finally, add Stealth to your list of class skills.

### SHADOW SHROUD (SU) 3rd Level

As a move action, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to shroud yourself in dim light for 1 minute. Darkvision provides no benefit against this gloom, and nonmagical light can't change this light level. Magical light can change this light level only if from a source with a CR or level higher than yours. You can dismiss this dim light as a move action, and it ends automatically if you lose consciousness.

### SHADOW WEAVER (SU) 6th Level

If you have concealment from dim light or darkness, you can become invisible as a standard action. This invisibility

lasts for a number of minutes per day equal to your mystic level. This duration needn't be continuous, but it must be used in 1-minute increments. You can dismiss this invisibility as a move action, and it ends automatically if you lose consciousness.

### SHADOW PUPPET (SP) 9th Level

While you are invisible from shadow weaver or shrouded in shadow from shadow blend, you can cast *holographic image* (spell level 3rd or lower). You can do so twice per day, but you can spend 1 Resolve Point to cast the spell again after expending those uses. Any hologram you create using the 3rd-level version can include intelligible speech, if you wish.

### SHADOW BLEND (SU) 12th Level

If you are hidden or invisible in dim light or darkness, other creatures cannot use blindsense, blindsight, or sense through to locate you. In addition, if you're benefiting from this feature and make noise that could reveal you, including speaking, creatures become aware of your presence in the dim or dark area you're in but not your specific location. If you attempt to bully or demoralize a creature while benefiting from this feature, you can double the bonus to Intimidate you receive from your channel skill mystic feature.

### SHADOW DECOY (SU) 15th Level

When you take damage while in dim light or darkness, as a reaction you can spend 1 Resolve Point to conjure a shadowy clone while you fade into the shadows. If you do so, you take only half the damage, as the clone appears in your space. You must then move 5 feet, but you can move up to half your speed. You can attempt a Stealth check to remain hidden after you move, and the shadowy clone disappears. Reduce your movement on your next turn by the amount you moved when you used this ability.

### SHADOW ONSLAUGHT (SU) 18th Level

Once per day, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to create a swirling cloud of monstrous shades within a 60-foot-radius spread centered on you. The cloud lasts up to 1 round per mystic level you have. If you create this cloud on the Material Plane, you and creatures in the spell's area slip into an identical battlefield on the Shadow Plane. You and other creatures in the effect can't leave the area while it lasts. Each round, the shadows deal 3d6 bludgeoning damage and 3d6 cold damage to creatures hostile to you in the area. A target can attempt a Fortitude save to halve this damage. In addition, each time a creature takes damage, it can attempt a Will saving throw to disbelieve the shadowy illusion and take only half damage from it for the remainder of the effects duration. A creature that succeeds at both saves takes only one-quarter the effects damage that round. You can dismiss the effect as a move action. When the effect ends, any creatures it transported to the Shadow Plane return to the Material Plane.

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## SOLDIER FIGHTING STYLE: GLOOM GUNNER

A gloom gunner has an eldritch connection to the Shadow Plane. By choosing this style, you create this link and use it to infuse your weapon attacks with the dark dimension's uncanny magic. As your martial skill increases, so does your bond to the Shadow Plane. This stronger union with shadow allows you to become a frightening combatant with any armaments you wield.

A couple of these features add bonus fusions to a weapon you wield. No weapon can gain a fusion it already has. However, these bonus fusions don't count toward the maximum total level of fusions the weapon can have at once.

### GLOOM WEAPONS (SU) 1st Level

Due to your connection with the Shadow Plane, any weapon you wield is infused with planar power. Your melee and ranged attacks count as magic for the purposes of bypassing damage reduction and other situations, such as attacking incorporeal creatures.

### SHADOW FUSION (SU) 5th Level

Weapons are considered to have the *ominous* fusion (Core Rulebook 194) while you wield them. A creature that gains the shaken condition from your bonus *ominous* fusion can gain that condition again from the same weapon, even if 24 hours haven't passed.

### OMINOUS POWER (SU) 9th Level

If you score a critical hit with a weapon you wield, you can apply the critical hit effect of the *ominous* fusion in addition to one other critical hit effect the weapon has. When you render a target shaken, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to change that condition to frightened for the same duration. In addition, once per day when you fail a saving throw against a mind-affecting effect, you can reroll that saving throw.

### SHADOW SECRETS (SU) 13th Level

Weapons are considered to have the *ghost killer* fusion (Core Rulebook 194) while you wield them (this is in addition to the *ominous* fusion granted by your shadow fusion ability). In addition, you can use your connection to the Shadow Plane to add one of the following benefits to a weapon you wield. These benefits cause bizarre visual distortions when you use them because they're made possible by your manipulation of the spatial incongruities between the Shadow Plane and the Material Plane. A chosen benefit lasts until the end of your turn.

- As part of the action you use to attack, increase your reach with the weapon by 5 feet.
- As part of the action you use to attack, double the weapon's range increment.
- When you hit a creature, you can use a swift action to perform a dirty trick combat maneuver against it.

- As part of the action you use to attack, damage from the weapon you are using ignores hardness equal to your soldier level.

### SHADOW ATTACK (SU) 17th Level

As a standard action, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to make an attack against a creature you are aware of, ignoring all cover and concealment (including total). If the attack is a ranged attack, the target must be within your weapon's first range increment. The attack affects only your selected target, even if it normally affects an area or multiple targets. You still have to roll to hit your target, and an attack that misses has no effect

## FEATS

A PC can gain the following new feats by embracing dark personality aspects, or through significant interaction with the Shadow Plane or its corrupting elements.

### CORRUPTION'S GIFT

You have embraced your corruption.

**Prerequisites:** One or more corruption manifestations (see pages 40–45 of *Starfinder Adventure Path #10: The Diaspora Strain*).

**Benefit** Choose one of your manifestations and make it gift permanent. If you're ever cured of your corruption, you lose the stain but not the gift. You can take this feat multiple times, making a different gift permanent each time you do so. Each instance of this feat counts as a manifestation you have for calculating the save DC for corruption.

### GREATER SHADOW INFUSION

The energy of the Shadow Plane suffuses your body, mind, and spirit.

**Prerequisites:** Improved Shadow Infusion, Shadow Infusion, character level 13th.

**Benefit** As a reaction when you take damage, you can become insubstantial and reduce nonmagical kinetic damage you take by 100% and magical or energy damage you take by 50%. This benefit can't reduce damage from effects that deal full damage to incorporeal creatures. You can use this benefit once per day. After that, you can expend 1 Resolve Point to use it again. If your attempt to use this ability fails to reduce the damage you take, you don't expend its use or the Resolve Point.

### IMPROVED DEMORALIZE

You are skilled at quickly demoralizing your foes.

**Benefit** You can use the Intimidate skill to demoralize as a move action.

### IMPROVED SHADOW INFUSION

Your connection to the Shadow Plane has grown stronger.

**Prerequisites:** Shadow Infusion, character level 7th.

**Benefit** As a swift action, you can shroud yourself in shadow for 1 round. While shrouded in this fashion, you have



concealment, even in areas of normal or bright light, against creatures that have no ability to see or otherwise sense you through darkness. You can use this feat for 1 round per day per character level you have. These rounds need not be consecutive.

## SHADOW INFUSION

After enduring contact with the Shadow Plane, you have become infused with its energies.

**Prerequisites:** You must spend a significant time on the Shadow Plane or otherwise become infused with its energies, such as by dying there or gaining shadow corruption. The GM determines whether you qualify for this feat.

**Benefit** You gain low-light vision and darkvision to a range of 60 feet. If you already have darkvision, you gain the see in darkness ability (*Alien Archive* 156).

## SPELLS

Each of the following new spells has a connection to the energies of the Shadow Plane.

### BORROW CORRUPTION

**School** transmutation

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Range** touch

**Target** willing creature touched

**Duration** 1 round/level (D)

**Saving Throw** none; **Spell Resistance** no

You touch a willing creature with at least one manifestation from corruption (see pages 40–45 of *Starfinder Adventure Path #10: The Diaspora Strain*) and expend 2 Resolve Points. If you do so, you temporarily gain any stains and gifts that corruption grants to the target, and the target retains them. If a gift you gain has limited uses, you can use the gift only by expending 1 Resolve Point for each use.

### GLOOM MOTE

**School** conjuration (creation, shadow)

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Range** medium (100 ft. +10 ft./level)

**Effect** a mote of darkness

**Duration** 1 round/level (D)

**Saving Throw** none; **Spell Resistance** no

You draw forth the energy of the Shadow Plane and form it into a floating mote of gloom. The mote creates dim light in a 5-foot radius. It also lowers the light level within 20 feet of it by one step, down to dim. As a move action, you can move the mote up to 60 feet in any direction. The mote winks out if the distance between you and it exceeds the spell's range. You can have only one *gloom mote* spell active at a time. If you cast this spell while another *gloom mote* of yours is still in effect, the previous casting is dispelled.

### SHADOW JUMP

**School** conjuration (shadow, teleportation)

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Range** close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

**Targets** you and touched objects

**Duration** concentration, 1 round + 1 round/3 levels (D)

**Saving Throw** none, Will negates (object); **Spell Resistance** no, yes (object)

Your body forms a connection to the Shadow Plane, allowing you to teleport through it, rather than the Astral Plane, with ease. While this spell is active, as a move action, you can teleport to any area of dim light or darkness you can see within range. If you leave a threatened space, you have concealment (20% miss chance) against any foe that makes an attack of opportunity against you.

### SLITHERING CHAIN

**School** conjuration (summoning) [emotion, fear, mind-affecting]

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Effect** a chain (or chains) sharpened at one end

**Duration** instantaneous

**Saving Throw** Will partial, see text; **Spell Resistance** no

You call forth a chain from the Shadow Plane, causing it to burst out from the ground and attempt to hinder a target within the spell's range. The chain attempts a trip combat maneuver against the target; its attack bonus is equal to your base attack bonus + your key ability score modifier + 4. If the chain successfully trips the target, that target must attempt a Will saving throw or become shaken for 1d4 rounds.

You can cast this spell as a full action. If you do, you summon two chains instead of one. Each chain attempts its combat maneuver separately and they must attack two different targets within the spell's range.

### UMBRAL TENDRILS

**School** illusion (shadow)

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Range** medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

**Area** 20-ft.-radius spread

**Duration** 1 round + 1 round/3 levels (D)

**Saving Throw** Will half, see text; **Spell Resistance** yes

You summon a vision of a writhing mass of shadowy tendrils to assault creatures within 10 feet of the ground in the area. This area is difficult terrain. The first time a creature enters the area (including when the effect appears) on its turn, and each round the creature remains there, the creature takes 4d6 bludgeoning damage and becomes entangled. If the tendrils are in dim light or darkness, the DC of the Will save increases by 2. A creature that succeeds at a Will saving throw halves the damage it takes and avoids becoming entangled. The same casting of this spell can't render such a creature entangled again. By succeeding at subsequent saves, such a creature reduces damage it takes from the same casting of the spell to one-quarter normal.

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## ALIEN ARCHIVES

Patient #4519 was brought in with only superficial wounds, but an impaired mental state. She had no recollection of her name, her house, her position, or even what planet she was on. She expressed a childlike fascination with every medical instrument brought in to examine her. However, this wonderment turned to terror when she glimpsed a set of extraction forceps, crying out, "The mantis! Don't let its claws touch me again!" She then lapsed into a catatonic state for several hours. When she regained awareness, she had no memory of her outburst... or of anything that had happened to her since she arrived at the hospital.

—From the notes of Dr. Zandibar Karash from the Black Door Hospital on Apostae



# PLAGUE OOZE

CR  
7

XP  
3,200



N Large ooze

**Init** +2; **Senses** blindsight (vibration) 60 ft., sightless;

**Perception** +14

**Aura** sickening cloud (20 ft., DC 15)

## DEFENSE

**EAC** 18; **KAC** 20

**Fort** +11; **Ref** +7; **Will** +4

**Immunities** ooze immunities

**Weaknesses** vulnerable to *remove affliction*

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

**Melee** slam +17 (2d6+11 B plus ooze plague)

**Ranged** plague spore +15 (2d8+7 B plus ooze plague)

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

**Offensive Abilities** ooze plague, trample (2d6+11 B plus ooze plague, DC 15)

## STATISTICS

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

**Other Abilities** mindless

## ECOLOGY

**Environment** any (Aucturn)

**Organization** solitary, pair, or epidemic (3–6)

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Ooze Plague (Ex)** Contact with a plague ooze can cause an affliction called ooze plague.

**Plague Spore (Ex)** A plague ooze can fling plague spores, which are bits of disease-ridden matter, with a range increment of 20 feet.

**Sickening Cloud (Ex)** A creature that fails the save against the aura becomes sickened for 1 round. A creature that

remains sickened in this way for 2 consecutive rounds becomes fatigued.

**Vulnerable to Remove Affliction (Ex)** If a plague ooze is the target of a *remove affliction* spell, the ooze takes 7d10 damage and loses its ooze plague and plague spore abilities for 1d4+1 rounds. With a successful Fortitude saving throw, the ooze halves the damage and regains its abilities after only 1 round.

## OOZE PLAGUE

**Type** disease (contact or injury); **Save** Fortitude DC 15

**Track** mental and physical (special); **Frequency** 1/day

**Effect** A creature that has this disease, even in its latent state, is contagious and can transmit the ooze plague through contact with others; the victim takes all penalties from progressing on the physical and mental disease tracks; at the impaired state and beyond, penalties from the weakened state become permanent until the victim benefits from a *remove affliction* or *restoration* spell; death from this disease causes the corpse to transform into a plague ooze 24 hours later.

**Cure** 2 consecutive saves

A plague ooze is disease given predatory form. Such oozes live in the wilds of Aucturn, but rumor holds that cultists of Urgathoa created and released the first specimens. What these creators intended might never be understood, but they ensured the creatures' propagation. Not only can plague oozes convert Aucturn's fleshy substances into more of their kind, but they can also hunt other life forms to spread ooze plague. Without an immediate cure, victims without symptoms become carriers who, absent quarantine, infect others.

Proliferation of plague oozes then continues as a ghastly epidemic, even long after the source ooze was destroyed. Because of this mode of procreation, plague oozes have been found on worlds far out into the Vast.

## SIGNAL OF SCREAMS

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## GIANT, SHADOW

CR  
13

XP  
25,600



LE Large humanoid (extraplanar, giant)  
**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision;  
**Perception** +28

### DEFENSE

**EAC** 27; **KAC** 29

**Fort** +17; **Ref** +12; **Will** +15

**Defensive Abilities** shadow cloak; **Immunities** ability damage, ability drain, cold, negative levels

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**HP** 227

**Melee** ecclesiastic shadow chains +26 (9d4+21 C plus energy drain; critical bind)

**Ranged** tomb-class void rifle +23 (2d10+13 C; critical suffocate [DC 19]) or hurled debris +23 (6d6+13 B plus energy drain)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with shadow chains)

**Offensive Abilities** crush (3d12+21 B), energy drain (1 level, DC 19)

### STATISTICS

**Str** +8; **Dex** +3; **Con** +6; **Int** +0; **Wis** +4; **Cha** +0

**Skills** Athletics +23, Intimidate +28, Stealth +23

**Feats** Deadly Aim, Improved Combat Maneuver (bull rush)

**Languages** Common, Shadowtongue

**Gear** superior iridishell, ecclesiastic shadow chains<sup>AR</sup>, tomb-class void rifle<sup>AR</sup> with 1 high-capacity battery (40 charges)

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any (Shadow Plane)

**Organization** solitary, gang (2–5), family (6–13 plus 1 shadow giant mystic and 1 shadow giant soldier), or company (14–33 plus 1 shadow giant soldier)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Energy Drain (Su)** A shadow giant inflicts its energy drain attack no more than once per round via its first successful melee attack or via hurl debris.

**Hurl Debris (Ex)** See page 62 of *Starfinder Alien Archive 2*.

**Shadow Cloak (Su)** As a move action in any illumination other than direct sunlight, a shadow giant can cloak itself in moving shadows that grant it concealment (20% miss chance) for 1d6+6 rounds. It can use this ability three times per day.

Members of an ancient species that has long inhabited the Shadow Plane, shadow giants are laconic and tend keep to themselves. They emerge from obscurity rarely and only to gather victims for sacrifice in profane rites. These elaborate religious ceremonies are led by shamans on stepped obsidian pyramids and inevitably conclude in a bacchanal of bloody sacrifice. An average shadow giant stands 15 feet tall and weighs 2,400 pounds. Most have gray skin and pale hair.

By tapping into ancient agreements, beings with connections to the Shadow Plane can bind shadow giants to certain tasks. Often set upon enemies, used as shock troops in wider conflicts, or tasked to guard important places, shadow giants find these pacts a source of comfort, and, driven by pride and a sense of duty, they doggedly strive to complete their contracts.





# KAYAL

CR  
7

XP  
3,200



Kayal operative

N Medium outsider (native)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;

**Perception** +15

## DEFENSE

**EAC** 19; **KAC** 20

**Fort** +6; **Ref** +9; **Will** +10

**Defensive Abilities** evasion, shadow blending, uncanny agility; **Resistances** cold 5, electricity 5

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** tactical knife +15 (2d4+8 S)

**Ranged** red star plasma pistol +13 (1d8+7 E & F; critical burn 1d8) or

triple focus rifle +13 (3d4+7 F; critical burn 2d4)

**Offensive Abilities** debilitating trick, trick attack +4d8

**Kayal Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 7th)

1/day—*disguise self* (humanoid only)

## STATISTICS

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

**Skills** Acrobatics +20, Bluff +20, Mysticism +15, Sleight of Hand +15, Stealth +20, Survival +15

**Languages** Common, Shadowtongue

**Other Abilities** operative exploits (bleeding shot, cloaking field), specialization (ghost)

**Gear** d-suit II, red star plasma pistol with 2 batteries (20 charges each), triple focus rifle<sup>AR</sup> with 1 high-capacity battery (40 charges), tactical knife

## ECOLOGY

**Environment** any (Shadow Plane)

**Organization** solitary, hunting party (2-6), or collective (7-20)

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Shadow Blending (Su)** Attacks against a kayal in dim light have a 50% miss chance instead of the normal 20% miss chance. This ability does not grant total concealment; it just increases the miss chance.

Also known as fetchlings, kayals are descendants of humans trapped on the Shadow Plane millennia ago. The ambient essence of shadow has long since permeated their forms, making them their own unique species. Their time spent without direct access to light has

## RACIAL TRAITS

**Ability Adjustments:** +2 Dex, +2 Cha, -2 Wis

**Hit Points:** 4

**Size and Type:** Kayals are Medium outsiders with the native subtype.

**Kayal Magic:** Kayals can use *disguise self* once per day as a spell-like ability; the caster level of this effect is equal to the kayal's level. Kayals can assume only the form of a humanoid creature using this ability.

**Kayal Vision:** Kayals have darkvision with a range of 60 feet and low-light vision, meaning they can see in dim light as if it were normal light.

**Shadow Blending:** See the stat block.

**Shadow Resistances:** Kayals have cold resistance 5 and electricity resistance 5.

left them bleached of color. Dark, pale, or gray of skin tone, with white or pitch-black hair and yellow eyes, kayals have tall, lithe bodies that seem to blend in and out of darkness effortlessly. Some kayals are said to be able to command the shadows themselves, manipulating their appearance or using them as a conduit to travel across space and even between the planes.

Kayals have spent hundreds of centuries dealing with creatures native to the Shadow Plane, which requires a certain amount of moral ambiguity.

As a result, they have made deals and agreements with creatures that most other species would consider dangerous or evil. For

kayals, these agreements were a matter of simple survival—the pragmatic decision is always the right one, even if it involves shaking hands with those others might consider to be monsters.

Kayals on the Material Plane tend to conceal their appearances with hooded cloaks or masks, even though they are not sensitive to bright light. These kayals hide themselves either out of fear of prejudice from those who had bad dealings with their ancestors or because they are embarking on nefarious deeds and don't wish to be recognized by local authorities.

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# MEMENTOR

CR  
13

XP  
25,600



NE Medium fey (extraplanar)

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

**Perception** +23

## DEFENSE

**EAC** 26; **KAC** 27

**Fort** +14; **Ref** +14; **Will** +16

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 90 ft. (Ex, average)

**Melee** claws +21 (4d6+16 S and memory theft; critical confuse<sup>AR</sup> [DC 21])

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 13th)

1/day—*greater synaptic pulse* (DC 24), *modify memory* (DC 24)

3/day—*confusion* (DC 23), *discern lies* (DC 23),  
*haste*, *mind probe* (DC 23)

HP 190

At will—*hologram memory* (DC 22), *mind thrust* (3rd level, DC 22)

## STATISTICS

**Str** +3; **Dex** +6; **Con** +0; **Int** +3; **Wis** +5; **Cha** +4

**Skills** Acrobatics +23, Bluff +28, Culture +23, Sense Motive +28, Stealth +28

**Languages** Common, First Speech; truespeech

## ECOLOGY

**Environment** any (Shadow Plane)

**Organization** solitary or convocation (2–4)

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Memory Theft (Su)** A creature that takes damage from a mementor's claws must succeed at a DC 21 Will save or suffer memory loss that takes the form of a cumulative –1 penalty to Intelligence-, Wisdom-, and Charisma-based ability checks and skill checks, as well as to the DCs of spells and special abilities based on those ability scores. If this penalty ever reduces a spellcaster's key ability score modifier to +0 or lower, the spellcaster can no longer cast their highest level of spells. When the penalty reduces a creature's ability modifier in any affected ability score to –5, the creature is immediately affected as if by the *feeblemind* spell. A creature that doesn't arrive at the *feeblemind* stage can recover from the penalty as if each –1 increment were a temporary negative level. The *restoration* spell works on each –1 increment as if it were a permanent negative level, but *psychic surgery* can cure the entire penalty at once. Mindless creatures are immune to this effect.

Skeletally slim, a mementor is like a humanoid mantis with chitin of various hues. The creature also has mantis-like wings, which it drones, shimmers, and vibrates in specific patterns to create its *confusion* spell-like ability, and which it snaps to create its *greater synaptic pulse*.

Mementors are fey embodiments of the horrors of memory loss. They consume memories, causing lasting amnesia in their victims. Such prey can end up in a permanent state of infantile wonder, fear, or bewilderment.

Though fey, mementors are native to the Shadow Plane and tied to Count Ranalc, one of the Eldest. Some scholars believe they manifested from the count's fear of or rage at being forgotten. Others say mementors arose as a byproduct of the Gap. Unscrupulous corporations and governments employ mementors as memory assassins to wipe knowledge from targets without killing them. Mementors of this sort often work with a team of mortal mercenaries.

A mementor stands 6 feet tall but weighs just 100 pounds.





# SHODRAV

CR  
11

XP  
12,800



NE Large outsider (evil, extraplanar)

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

## DEFENSE

**EAC** 24; **KAC** 26

**Fort** +13; **Ref** +13; **Will** +12

**Weaknesses** light blindness

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** bite +24 (4d6+19 P) or

shadow tendril +22 (see text; 3d8+11 P; critical bleed 2d6)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (50 ft. with shadow tendril)

**Offensive Abilities** create darkness, shadow jaunt, surprise action

## STATISTICS

**Str** +8; **Dex** +3; **Con** +5; **Int** -3; **Wis** +2; **Cha** -1

**Skills** Athletics +20, Stealth +25

**Languages** Aklo

## ECOLOGY

**Environment** any (Shadow Plane)

**Organization** solitary

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Planar Sight (Su)** A shodrav can see from the Shadow Plane into any coterminous plane, and vice versa.

**Shadow Jaunt (Su)** A

shodrav can move from the Shadow Plane to any coterminous plane, and vice versa, using 10 feet of movement.

**Shadow Tendril (Su)** A

shodrav's shadow tendril targets EAC.

**Surprise Action (Ex)** A

shodrav that can act during a surprise round can take its full round of actions.

A shodrav resembles a bizarre theropod with three oval eyes and long flaps of skin dangling to each side of its fanged mouth. Countless tendrils of semitangible shadow weave through the shodrav's pallid body, leaving tubular openings like the burrowing of worms through flesh. These tendrils can cause similar

wounds in a shodrav's prey, sucking away life force before the shodrav devours the flesh

While prey bleeds from wounds dealt by a shodrav's tendrils, anyone looking through such a wound from either the Material Plane or the Shadow Plane sees the corresponding area on the opposite plane. These bizarre openings remain should a victim die from its injuries. Unscrupulous scholars and Kuthite zealots seek corpses that bear these windows to the Shadow Plane, harvesting the affected parts to create magic items.

Native to the Shadow Plane, shodravs distort the boundary between their home plane and other planes when they continuously inhabit areas where the Shadow Plane borders another. As the barrier thins, other creatures might inadvertently cross between the planes. In time, the veil can cease to exist altogether, with the Plane of Shadow's features overwriting those of the corresponding area on the bordering plane. Older and stronger shodravs can affect greater areas, but only rarely an area wider than a large structure.

Shodravs prefer prey from the Material Plane, and often make lairs in Shadow Plane regions that border it, remaining until their native territories have displaced the Material Plane counterparts. Before the transformation is complete, a shodrav's hidden presence can be inferred by mysterious disappearances or the unexplained presence of other creatures from the Shadow Plane. If a shodrav leaves its lair for an extended time, the region slowly returns to normal as the dimensional barriers re-form.

The average shodrav is 8 feet tall and 15 feet long, counting its tail. It weighs 750 pounds.



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## VELSTRAC, HERETIC

CR  
8

XP  
4,800



LE Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful, velstrac)

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +16

### DEFENSE

**EAC** 20; **KAC** 22

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

**Defensive Abilities** integrated weapons, regeneration 5 (good or silver); **DR** 2/-; **Immunities** cold

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 50 ft.

**Melee** integrated singer velstrac flenser +20 (2d6+14 S & So; critical 1d8 bleed)

**HP** 125

**Ranged** integrated aphelion laser rifle +17 (3d6+8 F; critical 1d6 burn)

**Offensive Abilities** unnerving gaze (30 ft., DC 16)

### STATISTICS

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

**Skills** Athletics +21, Intimidate +16, Stealth +16

**Languages** Common, Infernal

**Gear** aphelion laser rifle with 2 high-capacity batteries (40 charges each), singer velstrac flenser<sup>AA2</sup> with 2 batteries (20 charges each); **Augmentations** accelerated datajack, mk 2 dermal plating, respiration compounder, standard speed suspension, vocal modulator

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any (Shadow Plane)

**Organization** section (2-5), squad (6-12), or platoon (13-25)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Unnerving Gaze (Su)** A heretic's visage causes viewers to doubt all of their most deeply held convictions. A creature that fails a DC 16 Will saving throw against this gaze is confused for 1 round. This is a mind-affecting effect.

From a distance, heretic velstracs resemble humanoids enhanced with cybernetic weapons and other augmentations, but a closer look removes all doubt about the nature of these outsiders. Their cybernetics seem to twist their flesh, even splitting it open in places to expose muscle and bone. Most heretics have dark leather plates sutured onto their flesh while pitted iron masks with holes for eyes are riveted onto their faces. Heretics integrate their weapons into their bodies; usually, one arm is replaced by a velstrac flense, and a laser rifle is attached to a shoulder on an articulated chassis, allowing the weapon to pivot in all directions.

To other velstracs, heretics are seen as crude butchers lacking finesse and subtlety. Heretics consider the consensual exchange of pain to be the weakest form of torture and despise it for its lack of true danger, preferring to engage in what they refer to as "vital combat" with their victims. It is rare to find a heretic on its own, as they tend to form close-knit bands that seek out intruders to the Shadow Plane and deliver righteous pain unto them.

Once every few centuries, a velstrac demagogue reveals himself to a platoon of heretics and charges them with a vital "holy mission" that involves the outsiders traveling to a world on the Material Plane and cleansing it of all life. These targets aren't chosen randomly; they are usually ones inhabited by sentient creatures whose souls are mostly stained with corruption and whose deaths will create more velstracs.





# VESPERS HOUND

CR  
10

XP  
9,600



LE Medium outsider (extraplanar)

**Init** +5; **Senses** blindsight (vibration) 60 ft.; **Perception** +19

## DEFENSE

HP 165

**EAC** 23; **KAC** 25

**Fort** +12; **Ref** +12; **Will** +11

**Defensive Abilities** faceless, regeneration 5 (good or silver);  
**Immunities** cold

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** claw +23 (2d10+18 P; critical 1d6 bleed)

**Offensive Abilities** prison of chains

## STATISTICS

**Str** +8; **Dex** +5; **Con** +2; **Int** +0; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +3

**Skills** Acrobatics +19, Athletics +24, Intimidate +19,  
Stealth +24

**Languages** Common, Infernal (can't speak any language)

**Other Abilities** slip through the shadows

## ECOLOGY

**Environment** any (Shadow Plane)

**Organization** solitary or clutch (2-5)

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Faceless (Ex)** A vespers hound has no discernible facial features. It is immune to sense-dependent effects, as well as effects that target standard senses, such as gaze attacks.

**Prison of Chains (Su)** As a standard action, a vespers hound can attempt to trap a single creature within 30 feet by lashing out with the length of chain that makes up its spine. The target must succeed at a DC 19 Reflex saving throw or become entangled and knocked prone. At the beginning of each round the target is entangled, the chains try to strangle the target, dealing 2d8 bludgeoning damage. A trapped victim can attempt a DC 30 Acrobatics check to end the entangled condition. Alternatively, an adjacent ally can pull the chains off the victim with a full action that requires no check. The vespers hound can't move more than 30 feet from a target it entangles in this way until the trapped victim escapes or is set free, or until the vespers hound releases the victim as a move action.

## Slip through the Shadows

**(Su)** As a standard action, a vespers hound can travel between

shadows, as *dimension door*. The vespers hound must begin and end this movement in areas of dim light or darker, and it cannot bring any other creatures with it. It can jump a total of 100 feet per day; this amount can be split among many jumps, but each jump less than 10 feet counts as a 10-foot jump for the purpose of this total.

No one is sure what these Shadow Plane beasts originally looked like before velstracs began to surgically alter, breed, and train them, giving them the name "vespers hounds." Some think velstracs removed the creatures' faces and grafted on a fifth limb, but stranger creatures have been noted to thrive on distant worlds and unusual planar environments. However, most scholars agree that the length of spiked chain that runs along a vespers hound's back and seems to serve as its spine is definitely a velstrac addition. Those who witness a vespers hound extending that chain to envelop a nearby victim (and survive to tell the tale) are doubly certain about this theory.

Instinctively able to sniff out places where corruption and suffering have taken root, vespers hounds are sometimes used by velstracs as tracking beasts and faithful pets. Their presence seems to exacerbate dormant shadow corruption festering within mortals, and though vespers hounds don't need to eat, they seem to enjoy tearing into such mortals' flesh. A vespers hound is approximately 5 feet long, stands about 3 feet high at the shoulder, and weighs 140 pounds.



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## NODETHE

*World of Waking Dreams*

**Diameter:**  $\times 1$ ; **Mass:**  $\times 1$

**Gravity:**  $\times 1$

**Location:** The Vast

**Atmosphere:** Normal

**Day:** 25 hours; **Year:** 360 days

Fourth world in the Orphene star system, and the only world in the system that isn't a gas giant, Nodethe is at first blush a typical habitable world. It has ice caps at the poles; over half its total area is covered in oceans; and it bears the normal mix of deserts, forests, mountains, plains, and swamps. The weather is windy, with rainstorms more likely to be heavy and dust clouds more likely to last for days, compared to most worlds. However, the breathable atmosphere, broad mix of edible and domesticable flora and fauna, and wealth of useful minerals near the surface of its crust made Nodethe an extremely appealing target for colonization. At some point during the Gap, a fleet of massive, slower-than-light ships left what was then known as the Golarion system and eventually reached Nodethe. No one is sure how these colonizers knew to head to this new world or what their intent was, but by the time history became reliable again, Nodethe already had nearly a dozen stable colony cities with elf, formian, lashunta, and human citizens.

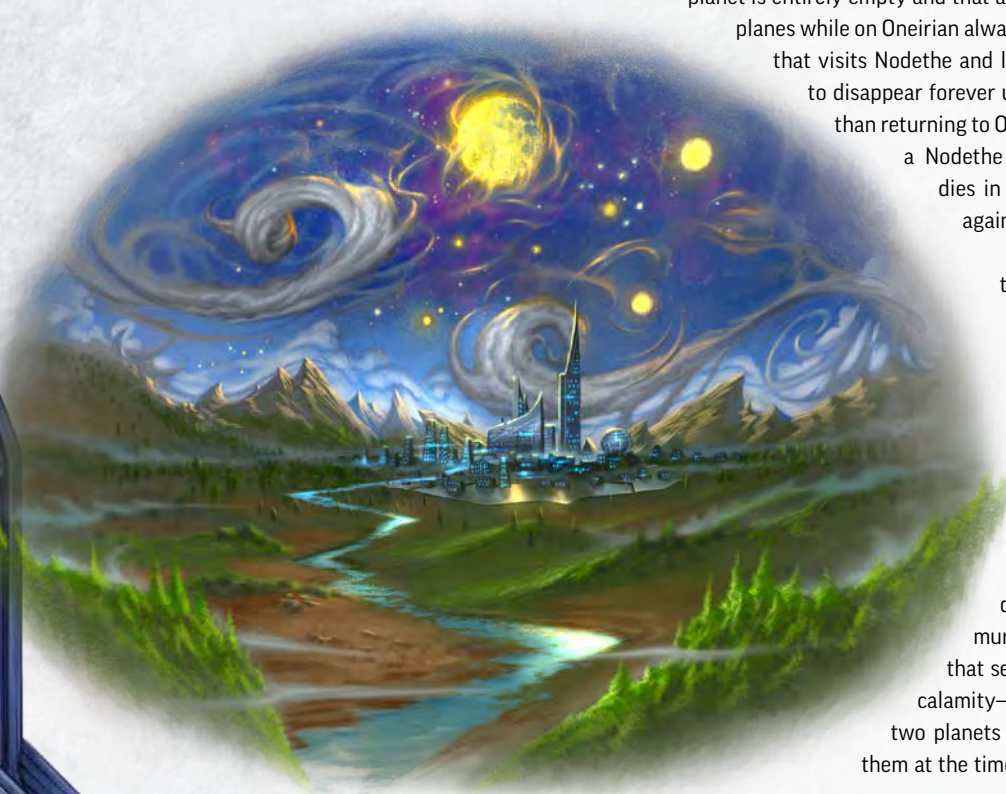
The colony-states of Nodethe are independent, and though they compete economically and for control of the planet's natural resources, conflicts among them have never blossomed into full-fledged war. Each has worked to earn status as a protectorate of the Pact Worlds since communication was established. Unfortunately, their refusal to combine under a planetary government and Nodethe's unusual secondary existence have limited official recognition to little more than embassies and trade deals.

In a poorly understood phenomenon, Nodethe is connected to an entirely separate world, Oneirian, which can be accessed only while sleeping. The geography, flora, and fauna of Oneirian are similar to that of Nodethe. However, Oneirian has a separate array of cities, each showing signs of being millennia older than the colony-states of Nodethe and populated by a much broader array of species. Anyone who arrives on Nodethe travels to Oneirian upon falling asleep, disappearing from one reality and moving about freely and with all the energy of a full night's rest in Oneirian's environment. They return to Nodethe when they sleep once again. Those born on Oneirian similarly travel to and from Nodethe when they sleep, but only once or twice each month; the exact logistics of this timing are still a mystery.

Although the night sky of Oneirian has a dreamy and starry quality, the heavens around it are actually devoid of stars. Travelers report that nearby space accessible from the planet is entirely empty and that attempts to travel to other planets while on Oneirian always fail. An Oneirian native that visits Nodethe and leaves the planet appears to disappear forever upon falling asleep rather than returning to Oneirian's reality. Similarly, a Nodethe visitor to Oneirian who dies in that realm is never seen again in Nodethe's reality.

The most common theory about the planet suggests that Oneirian might be linked to the Dimension of Dreams. References found in oldest ruins mention other locations on that demiplane, such as the Dreamlands and Leng.

Scholars have recently discovered an ancient mural in an Oneirian cave that seems to indicate a coming calamity—one that will merge the two planets and kill any who inhabit them at the time.





## NEXT MONTH

### FIRE STARTERS

By James L. Sutter

At the opening of the Dawn of Flame Adventure Path, a magical portal to the Plane of Fire disappears into the sun. An overwhelming telepathic burst from within the star quickly follows, and a scientist recruits the heroes to find out what's going on. The mission takes the heroes to the Burning Archipelago and Asanatown to meet another researcher who can help. But before that meeting can happen, the recent psychic disturbance leads radicals among the lashuntas to take matters into their own hands, and they seal Asanatown off from the rest of the city. Trapped, the heroes must rescue their contact and return power to the proper authorities before they can escape!

### ASANATOWN

By Jason Tondro

Soon after the Burning Archipelago's discovery, lashuntas traveled to the city in the sun. More sought a new life there after the end of the formian-lashunta war on Castrovel.

However, a psychic foreboding erupted from somewhere within the star nearly two decades ago. Those who endured became paranoid isolationists, and social tensions eventually led the lashuntas of the Burning Archipelago to form their own enclave, Asanatown.

### THE CHURCH OF SARENRAE

By Patrick Brennan

Followers of Sarenrae discovered the Burning Archipelago, and the faith remains a central fixture in the bubble-city's society. Learn more about Sarenrae's worship, as well as details on the gear Sarenites favor.

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#### HEART OF NIGHT

#### PART 1: THE SHADOW OF VERCES

#### PART 2: STARLESS SKIES

#### PART 3: TERMINAL FREQUENCY

#### CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

#### THE SHADOW PLANE

#### ALIEN ARCHIVES

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The background of the entire page is a dynamic illustration. At the top left, a large, purple and silver mechanical centipede-like creature with glowing blue eyes and a complex, segmented body is shown. To its right, a dark, scaly dragon-like creature with glowing yellow eyes and a long, curved horn is depicted. In the center, a small, blue, insect-like creature with large, translucent wings and a glowing blue core is shown. The overall scene is set against a dark, starry background with hints of a futuristic or alien environment.

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# VELSTRAC TORMENTOR

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

## MAP KEY

- |                        |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Captain's quarters  | d. Gunnery station   |
| 2. Life science lab    | e. Pilot's station   |
| 3. Arcane laboratory   | 7. Torture chamber   |
| 4. Medical bay         | 8. Crew quarters     |
| 5. Lift (to airlocks)  | 9. Tech workshop     |
| 6. Bridge              | 10. Armory           |
| a. Captain's chair     | 11. Brig             |
| b. Science office      | 12. Main engineering |
| c. Engineering station | 13. Power core       |







## SHADOW OF A DOUBT

Trapped on the Shadow Plane, the heroes find their only hope of returning home is to find and defeat Dr. Lestana Gragant, the twisted scientist who is attempting to broadcast a maddening signal throughout the galaxy. If the PCs can make their way past shadowy foes and terrifying obstacles, they might be able to wash the stain of corruption from their souls!

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