

STARFINDER



DAWN OF FLAME

ADVENTURE PATH

ASSAULT ON THE CRUCIBLE

BY JASON TONDRO



EXCORIATION COMBINE ALCAZAR TIER 10

Huge cruiser

Speed 6; **Maneuverability** average (turn 2); **Drift** 1

AC 24; **TL** 23

HP 230; **DT** 5; **CT** 46

Shields heavy 280 (forward 70, port 70, starboard 70, aft 70)

Attack (Forward) superlaser (2d4×10)

Attack (Port) light plasma torpedo launcher (3d8)

Attack (Starboard) light plasma torpedo launcher (3d8)

Attack (Turret) heavy plasma torpedo launcher (5d10)

Power Core Nova Ultra (300 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Basic; **Systems** basic medium-range sensors, crew quarters (luxurious), mk 3 duonode computer, mk 6 armor, mk 6 defenses; **Expansion Bays** cargo holds (2), life boats (2), medical bay, tech workshop

Modifiers +3 to any 2 checks per round, +2 Computers (sensors only), +1 Piloting; **Complement** 81 (minimum 20, maximum 100)

CREW

Captain (1 officer, 4 crew) Diplomacy +18 (10 ranks), gunnery +13, Intimidate +20 (10 ranks), Piloting +16 (10 ranks)

Engineer (2 officers, 15 crew each) Engineering +18 (10 ranks)

Gunners (4 officers, 4 crew each) gunnery +15 (10th level)

Pilot (1 officer, 5 crew) Piloting +18 (10 ranks)

Science Officer (2 officers, 8 crew each) Computers +18 (10 ranks)

Whether soaring through the open spaces of the Plane of Fire or traveling across the open void of the Material Plane, many efreeti warlords prefer the obscene luxury and protection provided by Excoriation Combine Alcazar cruisers. These impressive vessels boast an inordinate amount of defense in the form of layered armor plating and a shield system far in excess of that found on similarly sized vessels. A single superlaser capital weapon balances this defensive abundance, allowing an Alcazar to contribute to combat situations without getting too close to the front lines. Most efreeti captains prefer to linger near the back of the battlefield, allowing supporting vessels, such as the Excoriation Combine Jezail (see the inside front cover of *Starfinder Adventure Path #14: Soldiers of Brass*), to hassle and distract enemies up close. Most recognize that an Alcazar lacks the offensive output of ships similar in size, but noble efreet prefer to survive a conflict unscathed while allied vessels perform the up-close ship-to-ship combat.

The majority of Alcazar cruisers lazily glide through the Plane of Fire, some acting as mobile fortresses for minor efreeti nobles or as forward operating bases for Dominion of Flame military officers. However, a handful of these vessels operate on the Material Plane, and some have even fallen into non-efreeti hands. The most notable example of this is a band of pirates operating in Near Space known as Ymeri's Swords, in honor of the evil elemental lord of Fire. Ymeri's Swords operate out of a modified Alcazar dubbed *Princess of the Inferno*, which has swapped out several of the vessel's normal tracking weapons with additional laser batteries. Another heavily damaged Alcazar was found only months ago, orbiting an irregular blue sun in a region of the Vast known as Kazmurg's Absurdity.

STARFINDER

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ON THE COVER



General Khaim surveys his foes with open contempt in this menacing cover by Matias Tapia.



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INSIDE COVERS

This book refers to several other Starfinder products, including the *Starfinder Armory* by using the following abbreviation, 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.

Armory

AR



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Printed in China. ...Great achievements build a monument which shall endure until the sun grows cold.



DAWN OF FLAME

ADVENTURE PATH

ASSAULT ON THE CRUCIBLE

PART 1: THE COUNTDOWN BEGINS

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While the anassanois refit the PCs' starship, the PCs learn that General Khaim and his forces are moving on the Burning Archipelago. The PCs must make their way toward the sun's core, where the general's fortress—the Crucible—awaits.

PART 2: INTO THE CRUCIBLE

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The PCs must thwart Khaim's plan by moving the Far Portal back to the surface of Mataras. Accomplishing that task involves facing the elite forces guarding the Crucible and luring the general back to it.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Assault on the Crucible" is designed for four characters.

11

The PCs begin this adventure at 11th level.

12

The PCs should reach 12th level about halfway through the adventure.

13

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

ADVENTURE
BACKGROUND

The Malikah, daughter of an efreeti noble and the demigoddess Feronia, sits on a throne on the Plane of Fire, having conquered swathes of territory there. That accomplished, she set her sights on the conquest of the Pact Worlds' sun, Mataras, as a way to begin her ascension to divinity, desiring to be as revered and mighty as her half-brother, the empyreal lord Ragathiel. From among her legions, she chose one of her fiercest admirers—Khaim, a noble efreeti with vast experience in war—to command the forces that would take Mataras. Khaim took to the job with relish, quickly understanding the biggest challenge in such an invasion would be logistical. How could he reliably move and supply an entire invasion force from the Plane of Fire?

The Far Portal was his solution, yet the portal was distant from the Malikah's realm on the Plane of Fire and located on the outer edge of Mataras, in plain view of his future targets. Adding to the complication, Khaim had already claimed and refurbished an ancient fortress of unknown origin deep inside the sun. Naming the place the Crucible, he had designated it as the location where the Malikah's dominion on the Material Plane would begin, overseen by his personal platoon of elite warriors. The Far Portal, then, must somehow be moved to the Crucible, placed under his control, and—if possible—have its entrance on the Plane of Fire relocated to somewhere more favorable.

With the help of his intelligence network and access to the City of Brass (see page 49), Khaim learned that a coven of void hags might be able to do as he wished, especially if fueled by wishes he could provide. Khaim's agents met first with Daughter Drift, a young hag who had yet to complete her robes. Khaim offered to help her finish them, but as soon as Daughter Drift completed her meditations wearing her new garments, Khaim captured her and gave her a choice: give up her robes or die.

Khaim used the promise of returning the robes to coerce Daughter Drift into helping him capture two other hags, forcing the three to form a coven. Knowing that motivation requires more than threats, Khaim made the hags a promise: once he achieved his goals, in addition to returning their robes and their freedom, he would grant them each one wish. If they failed or betrayed him, however, their only reward would be death.

Khaim imprisoned the coven in the Crucible. The general and his engineers then helped the hags build a stellar cauldron, and the Malikah visited the Crucible to impart a tiny bit of her power into it. The device, created as it was by three hags and two efreet, became the *Fivefold Cauldron*. The cauldron in place, the hags and Khaim's forces designed a magical system they called *planar tethers*, with the cauldron as an anchor and power source. When these tethers activated, they could pull the Far Portal to the Crucible.

Khaim's careful preparations nearly came to naught when an ifrit pilot named Tash fled through the Far Portal into Pact Worlds space, seeking to warn of the pending efreeti invasion during *Starfinder Adventure Path #13: Fire Starters*. Because of this event, Khaim moved his timetable forward, activating the *planar tethers* and watching them work exactly as intended.

Having succeeded at this seemingly impossible task, Khaim wondered if he could pull off another. Khaim admires the Malikah for her ambition and cunning—traits he feels he shares—and has come to think of himself not just as her equal, but also as her potential partner. Still, Khaim believes that without any ties to divinity himself, the Malikah will never see him as anything more than a capable underling. Driven by these aspirations, he has tasked the hags with using the *Fivefold Cauldron* to grant him semi-divine status. The hags agreed, claiming that infusing the *Fivefold Cauldron* with wishes should distill enough power to accomplish Khaim's goal. However, the hags don't truly know what might happen as the cauldron grows in might. They know only that they desire this power for themselves.


While making these secret plans and trying to coordinate a covert invasion, Khaim discovered that the peaceful anassanois of Kahlannal were trying to warn the Burning Archipelago. In response, he attacked their city, gaining control of its *psychic resonator*. Unfortunately for him, this attack coincided with the elimination of Ezorod, who had been blocking the anassanois' telepathic communications. The anassanois thus successfully alerted the PCs, who have been a hitch in Khaim's plans since the Far Portal fell. Their successes, culminating with the liberation of Kahlannal, have forced the general to begin the invasion of the Burning Archipelago sooner than he had planned. Khaim intends to blockade the Archipelago just long enough to draw out any defenses the inhabitants can muster, crush those forces in battle, and then seize the bubble cities with ground troops. With the sun controlled by efreeti forces, Khaim can claim a victory and begin fortifying Mataras as the Malikah's domain.

PART 1:
THE COUNTDOWN
BEGINS

While the PCs take a little time to recover in Kahlannal after aiding in the defeat the occupying force there, the anassanois help repair and refit the *Sun Diver*, allowing the PCs to prepare it as a tier 11 starship for their voyage. Anassanoi knowledge from Kahlannal's shields allows the PCs to better integrate the *solar inverter* (from *Starfinder Adventure Path #16: The Blind City*) with the *Sun Diver*, eliminating the vessel's siccitate degradation weakness.

The anassanois have also used the *psychic resonator* to contact the Burning Archipelago through the lashuntas of Asanatown. (Messages via *psychic resonator* or system-wide comms take 1d6–1 hours to reach the Archipelago. Responses take equally

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long to return.) Lashunta leaders in Asanatown, such as Inona Norivahr and General Malonio Kam, don't hesitate to notify the wider Archipelago. With the Pact Worlds warned of pending invasion, Nib and the anassanoi Protectors fear the efreets have no choice but to push their timeline forward and strike the Burning Archipelago immediately. Interrogated occupiers support this theory. Fortunately for the PCs, anassanois know the location of the Crucible, thanks to their interactions with arrested former occupiers and collaborators. They also know that the Far Portal is somehow being kept near the Crucible. It's obvious to all involved that Pact Worlds forces must focus on defending the Burning Archipelago—and besides which, they have no means of reaching the Crucible. Citing the successful campaign in Kahlannal, Nib and the surviving Protectors suggest the PCs might take out the Crucible from within.

Nib and the Protectors are correct. General Khaim has begun moving vessels toward the Burning Archipelago, along with a small contingent aimed at Far Station. Moving through the Drift with "slaved" Drift engines to make the trip quickly and in formation, the efreets armada arrives at a rallying point near the sun's surface and begins its attack at approximately the same time the PCs are ready to depart for the Crucible.

The following read-aloud text presents PCs with news of the attack and assumes Zhyffor—the anassanoi the PCs first met on Kahlannal—is involved in the scene, along with Nib and Taeress. If any of these NPCs is unavailable (Nib might still be on the Burning Archipelago, or Taeress might be on Kahlannal), or if you prefer to use another NPC (such as Lurian Straza) to impart this message, read or paraphrase the following.

Zhyffor walks toward you, a wave of urgency accompanying his telepathic message. "We are receiving a dispatch meant for you! Please, come!"

He takes you to a communications center, where a team of anassanois works to capture and refine the incoming message. An image comes into focus on a view screen. It's Taeress, looking glum with scientific equipment in the background.

"I hope this reaches you," she says. "It could be my, um, last transmission. They say the efreets are close now."

She manipulates her controls, and an image from the Burning Archipelago's long-range sensor comes up. Dozens of brassy starships emerge from the sun, rising out of plasma that seems to ripple off their raised shields.

"We don't know how many," Taeress continues. "The Archipelago Senate has called for every ship to muster in defense. We have a few warships, especially from the Sarenites, but the rest are mostly yachts and freighters. I've heard the Pact is mustering, too, but who knows how long it'll take them to get here. We won't be much of a match. They've sounded a general evacuation, but most of us aren't leaving. We're going to a secure shelter. If... if Nib is still with you..."

A kasatha technician moves into view and touches Taeress's arm gently. "We have to go now, or we won't go at all."

Taeress wipes her eyes as she moves out of view.

As the message ends, Nib wanders in, a half-eaten snack in one hand. With no idea what's going on, she cheerfully asks, "What's up, team? Did I hear my name?"

If the PCs don't realize, NPCs point out that even if the *Sun Diver* could make it to the battle in time, it wouldn't make much of a difference. The PCs do, however, know the location of the Crucible, and that Khaim must be using the Far Portal to move his forces. Nib begs them to go to the base, as follows.

"Listen, you gotta take the *Sun Diver* to this efreets general's base and figure out a way to wreck his plans. I mean, if he finds out his base is under attack and his supply line is threatened, maybe he'll call off the attack. He'll have to, right? Right?"

Nib feels powerless, and she's desperate for the PCs to do something—anything. She and the DCI team have no means to go anywhere and must be content in helping the anassanois while the PCs take action. She begs if she must, knowing that countless lives, including Taeress's, are on the line.

PREPARING FOR DEPARTURE

As the PCs prepare to leave Kahlannal, in addition to upgrading the *Sun Diver*, the anassanois offer the PCs resources. This generosity enables the PCs to resupply and upgrade their gear. The gift amounts to 100,000 credits with an item level limit of 13. PCs can supplement these funds with their own.

Before the PCs depart, the anassanois reveal a couple other gifts, which cost the PCs no additional Build Points. They have placed a device in the *Sun Diver*'s conventional comms that allows the starship to communicate easily with Kahlannal. In addition, they've installed a hybrid system called an *antipathy transponder* into the comm systems (see the sidebar, page 5). Anassanoi technicians recommend using this device to avoid contact with efreets starships since direct visual observation is nearly impossible at any significant distance inside the sun.

When the PCs depart, see the Sun Passage section on page 5.

THE COUNTDOWN

During this adventure, Khaim's invasion force is blockading and then attacking the Burning Archipelago. The faster the PCs can threaten the Crucible and force General Khaim to return to it, the less damage the Archipelago takes. This adventure represents this need for speedy intervention with an abstract countdown that starts at 13 and counts down toward 0 as the PCs travel to the Crucible, engage in encounters, seize control of the *planar tethers*, and finally confront the general. Certain events can push the countdown back up, when the PCs accomplish something that helps thwart the general's scheme.

The countdown is a tool for you as GM to determine the narrative conclusion of the adventure, and not something the players need to be directly aware of. You should, however, use details from it to make it clear to players that time is of the essence—taking an 8-hour rest should be a last resort.

Knowing they're on a deadline allows the players to plan to spend their resources efficiently.

The countdown can change in a few ways. Each encounter details any effect it might have on the countdown in the Countdown section, whether positive or negative. To stop the countdown, the PCs must either defeat Khaim or move the Far Portal back to the sun's surface. When they do, the final countdown score determines how successful the efreeti attack was, per the Countdown Results table below.

COUNTDOWN RESULTS

Score	Results
13+	The insignificant damage the efreeti deal to the Burning Archipelago can be swiftly repaired. The battle goes so well, it's considered a miracle granted by Sarenrae.
12-9	The minor structural damage to the Burning Archipelago allows life to go back to normal after short repairs and cleanup. Several defending starships are lost, but the death toll is low. After a period of mourning and honoring the dead, everyone acknowledges that, despite the odds, the battle favored the defenders.
8-5	Significant damage to the Burning Archipelago and Sunrise Station results in substantial loss of life, as well as military casualties and loss of starships. Parts of the Archipelago must be temporarily evacuated, but after reconstruction efforts taking almost a year, everyone can move back. During this time, population turnover is high as people leave the city for good and others arrive. The destruction and population change adversely affects the Archipelago for years.
4-1	Efreeti forces break the defending starship lines and take control of space around the Burning Archipelago. They cripple Sunrise Station and mount a ground invasion in Dawnshore. After intense fighting, resulting in severe damage and major loss of life, the entrenched Pact Worlds forces repel the efreeti invasion. However, the efreeti hold Corona and Fireside for a month before retreating. The Pact Worlds government sends a refugee and supply fleet, which stays at the Archipelago for over a year. It takes several more years for the Burning Archipelago to return to normal, and many more years for the aftereffects to fade.
0 or lower	General Khaim's efreeti forces conquer the Burning Archipelago and lock down all the population centers. The Burning Archipelago becomes efreeti territory, and its new masters reshape the city as they wish. Even if General Khaim is subsequently defeated, the Malikah takes command of the bubble-settlement and claims it for herself.

ANTIPATHY TRANSPONDER

An *antipathy transponder* repels sensor scans with a mind-affecting compulsion. To activate this device, you must deactivate your normal transponder, rendering your starship unable to send or receive communications. The *antipathy transponder* then allows you to evade notice from passive sensors (but not the visual senses of creatures) that might detect you, provided the pilot handling your starship succeeds at a Piloting check with a DC of $10 + 1\frac{1}{2} \times$ the tier of the vessel to be fooled. To fool a fleet, use the highest starship tier among them, then increase the Piloting DC by 2. The pilot gains a bonus to this check equal to the bonus your starship gains from defensive countermeasures. However, any attempt to actively scan from your vessel while an *antipathy transponder* is on eliminates that bonus and increases the Computers DC for that scan by 2.

Anyone your *antipathy transponder* fools avoids actively scanning for your vessel. However, if a fooled crew has a reason to scan the area your starship is in, the *antipathy transponder* doubles the bonus against active scans your vessel has from defensive countermeasures. If the check to scan fails, the crew scanning the area your ship is in fails to detect your vessel.

If your starship does anything other than move or actively scan, such as attack or attempt to enter the Drift, the *antipathy transponder* fails to work. Also, activating an *antipathy transponder* has no effect on those who already know your starship is present—once creatures are aware of your ship, an *antipathy transponder* aboard your vessel can work against them only after they have been unaware of your starship's location for 1 hour or more. However, if starship combat starts while you have an *antipathy transponder* active and your enemies become aware of your starship only due to the initiation of hostilities, your pilot gains a bonus equal to your bonus from defensive countermeasures to the Piloting check to determine order of actions during the first round of that starship combat.

An *antipathy transponder* costs 3 Build Points and consumes 5 PCUs. Any penalty due to critical damage to sensors applies to Piloting checks to utilize an active *antipathy transponder*, as well as to the DCs for foes to successfully scan for a ship that's using an *antipathy transponder*. In addition, crew members exposed to an active *antipathy transponder* more than once or 1 hour during a 24-hour period become fatigued.

SUN PASSAGE

The PCs have gone into the sun before, but they're going deeper than ever this time. At this depth, the plasma is compressed to a density like that of a liquid. If the solar protections built into the *Sun Diver* had not been upgraded, they would be stressed near their limit. Kahlannal is deep inside the sun, so the PCs

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don't have far to go—the travel takes about 12 hours, allowing the PCs time to rest and prepare. However, the PCs have some opportunities to get distracted along the way, as detailed below.

EVENT 1: WALKING ON THE SUN

A short time after the PCs' starship leaves Kahlannal, the *Sun Diver's* computer informs them of an incoming comms hail. If the PCs listen to the message, read or paraphrase the following.

A masculine voice says, "Unknown vessel, my name is Rikard Girsten. Listen, I know this is impossible to believe, but I'm, uh, alive out here thanks to a new friend. Would you consider picking me up?"

Creatures: Rikard, a human mystic, is indeed free floating alive inside the sun, due to the aid of an onkushu named Uzmat. He and Uzmat can answer some questions via comms. (If statistics for Rikard become necessary, use a verthani Pure One [Alien Archive 118] without low-light vision and the skin mimic ability, and with the changes noted below.) Some sample questions and answers are presented in the following sections.

New friend? "I'll let them introduce themselves," says Rikard.

"Greetings," says a bassy voice that has an underlying roar like a large fire. "I am Uzmat. Although I could carry Rikard to safety, I believe he would be far safer and more comfortable inside your vessel."

What are you, Uzmat? "I am of the onkushus."

Any PC who succeeds at a DC 34 Mysticism check knows what an onkushu is and exactly how such a creature might save a human inside the sun. Uzmat is impressed if the PCs know of the onkushus. If no PC has knowledge of the onkushu, Uzmat describes their nature and powers.

How did you get into this situation, Rikard? "My wife, Hazl, and I were prisoners aboard an efreeti vessel called the *Eye of Feronia*. They were taking us to a base for interrogation, but a strange entity that was able to board the vessel from inside the sun attacked them. Apparently, someone drew the creature into the section of the ship I was on—the commissar's quarters and brig. Then, somehow, they ejected that section, which promptly started to burn up. Lucky for me, Uzmat was nearby."

Why did the efreet capture you? "I can't say, exactly. Hazl and I are Pls. We operate out of Stellacuna, and we were investigating some disappearances in Corona. We'd uncovered some coded messages an efreeti trading consortium called the Malikah Group was sending out of the city into the sun. Some thugs—ifrit and sulī mercs, I'm guessing—jumped us. After holding us for a while, they shipped us out."

Where's your wife? Rikard sounds sad and weary, saying, "She was being questioned elsewhere on the ship when we were attacked. I don't know where she is or if she's still alive."

Uzmat was nearby? Uzmat answers, "Yes. The efreet of the Sovereignty of the Crimson Sun have been preparing for a war, having moved the Far Portal into their domain. I have been watching their movements, but I do not know where

they are going. I was following a larger fleet, but it went into the Drift. Then I spied the vessel Rikard was aboard going the opposite way. I followed. I do not know what attacked them, for it evaded me. However, I did witness the ejection of one of the vessel's front sections. As it burned, I boarded and found Rikard."

If asked to further describe the starship Rikard was aboard, Uzmat does so. The PCs can easily recognize the description matches the configuration of a Pyre Overwatch, a Medium starship like the *Breath of Embers* from *Starfinder Adventure Path #13: Fire Starters* and vessels that guarded Kahlannal in *Starfinder Adventure Path #17: Solar Strike*.

What is the Sovereignty of the Crimson Sun? Uzmat responds. "The dominion of the Malikah, daughter of Feronia. I do not know why the Malikah wages war beyond the Plane of Fire."

Any PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Mysticism check knows that Feronia, the Fertile Flame, is a demigoddess of fire and fertility. She has numerous children born of her unions with various divine beings. It's said she has been in meditation since the Gap. If no PC knows this information, Uzmat can impart it.

If, upon learning of Uzmat's interest in the Malikah, any PC informs them of the attack on the Burning Archipelago, the onkushu becomes very interested. They'd like to inform their people, but they must see to Rikard's safety first.

How can we help? Uzmat says, "Allow me into your airlock. Then, I can deposit Rikard within and allow him to move inside your vessel. I shall then depart so you can seal your airlock behind me."

RIKARD GIRSTEN

CR 9

XP 6,400

Male human mystic

NG Medium humanoid (human)

HP 116

STATISTICS

Gear advanced lashunta tempweave

UZMAT

CR 13

XP 25,600

Agender onkushu (see page 57)

HP 210

Development: Whether the PCs take Rikard aboard or not, Uzmat becomes curious as to why they are so deep in the sun and asks about it. Use this line of conversation to lead the player into revealing the attack on the Burning Archipelago. Uzmat, concerned about this attack, reveals the onkushus are friends of Sarenites and expresses a desire to help. However, the onkushu must see to Rikard. If the PCs don't take Rikard aboard, Uzmat is forced to go to a safe location and has no further effect on this adventure. However, if Rikard goes with the PCs and Uzmat knows of the attack on the Burning Archipelago, the onkushu returns to the Plane of Fire through the Far Portal, drawing no notice from the forces on the Crucible. Uzmat meets with other onkushus and an angel visiting them. Then, with the help of the

angel (who can cast *interplanetary teleport* and *plane shift*), the onkushus aid the people of the Burning Archipelago.

Rikard doesn't know anything about the efreet invasion. He has two sons, Dwite and Kelvin, back on Stellacuna in the Burning Archipelago, though. When he finds out the efreet are attacking, he's desperate to act but has no idea how to help.

Story Award: Conversing with Rikard and Uzmat is an unusual experience, earning the PCs 32,000 XP.

Countdown: Subtract 1 from the countdown if the PCs engage in this encounter but do nothing else. If Uzmat aids the Burning Archipelago, add 2 to the countdown instead.

EVENT 2: SOLAR SIREN (CR 13)

Several hours after the PCs encounter Rikard and Uzmat, read or paraphrase the following.

The Sun Diver's computer says, "Y'all, I'm picking up debris and another comms message. It's fragmented. Give it a listen."

Static, pops, and whistles combine with a masculine voice that says, "We are... kidnapped us... help..."

Any PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Physical Science check can recognize that the likelihood of debris remaining in the sun is unlikely, albeit not impossible. If a PC succeeds at a DC 20 Mysticism check, they know that even efreeti vessels must have shields to survive more than a short time in the sun here. Though creatures from the Plane of Fire might be able to endure these depths, it's doubtful their gear would do so, precluding them communicating electronically.

A PC using the ship's computer to perform active scans who succeeds at a DC 21 Computers check finds the debris field consistent with what one might expect from a Small or possibly Medium destroyed efreeti starship. If the check exceeds the DC by 5 or more, the wreckage appears to be that of a Pyre Overwatch (the same sort of ship Rikard was aboard).

Any successful scan also shows that the debris contains one life-form. In this case, the GM should roll a hidden DC 23 Will saving throw for the scanning character, with a +2 circumstance bonus if the scan succeeded by 5 or more. If the saving throw is successful, the PC disbelieves the illusion, realizing that while the life-form is really out there, the debris and the message are both fake—the result of the scanners being somehow manipulated to return ghost readings.

Creature: If the PCs approach the false debris, they run into a nasty solar-adapted asteray named Elussa. If the *Sun Diver* makes only a close pass on the illusory debris but doesn't approach—such as due to having been forewarned by successful scans and saving throws—go to the Development section.

ELUSSA

CR 13

25,600 XP

Variant asteray (*Alien Archive* 18)

CE Medium fey

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +23 (+31 in space)

DEFENSE

HP 190

EAC 26; **KAC** 26

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

Defensive Abilities void adaptation; **Immunities** cold, fire, radiation

OFFENSE

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

Melee tail whip +20 (4d6+14 S)

Ranged adaptable blast +20 (2d10+13 E; critical arc 2d6 or 2d10+13 E & F; critical burn 2d6)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with tail whip)

Offensive Abilities sensor song

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th)

1/day—*confusion* (DC 23), *irradiate* (DC 22)

3/day—*charm monster* (DC 22), *dimension door*, *nondetection*

At will—*arcane sight*, *holographic image* (2nd-level, DC 21), *see invisibility*

TACTICS

Before Combat Elussa casts *nondetection* as the *Sun Diver* approaches, so if the science officer aboard had picked up the true life-form reading, that reading now disappears. The science officer can attempt to detect Elussa again, but the Computers DC to do so is 28. If the *Sun Diver* stops near the false debris field, Elussa attempts to enter the starship using *dimension door*. Elussa's *nondetection* lasts 13 hours, so the spell also applies to any attempts to locate the fey aboard the *Sun Diver*.

During Combat Elussa plays a cruel game of cat-and-mouse with the PCs, picking off those separated from others if possible. The fey flies to locations where it might go unnoticed, then attacks with hit-and-run tactics. Elussa uses *confusion* and *irradiate* on groups. The PCs can attempt to negotiate with Elussa as if the fey were indifferent—a bribe of a large amount of food grants a +2 circumstance bonus on such Diplomacy checks, although particularly fancy or delicious food can increase this bonus at the GM's discretion. If such an overture fails, Elussa decides tormenting the PCs is more enticing than organic sustenance. Thereafter, the PCs can repeat the attempt to negotiate, but Elussa's attitude after the first attempt fails is hostile.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 50 Hit Points or allowed to eat after being offered food, Elussa retreats into the sun.

STATISTICS

Str +1; **Dex** +6; **Con** +4; **Int** +2; **Wis** +3; **Cha** +8

Skills Bluff +28, Mysticism +28, Stealth +23

Languages Common; telepathy 300 ft.

Other Abilities no breath, solar adaptation, wake rider

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Adaptable Blast (Ex) Elussa's blast can be electrical or plasma and has a range increment of 80 feet.

Sensor Song (Ex) See *Alien Archive* 8.

Wake Rider (Su) See *Alien Archive* 8.

ASSAULT
ON THE
CRUCIBLE

PART 1:
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PART 2:
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CONTINUING
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OF FIRE

ALIEN
ARCHIVES

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Development: PCs who manage to talk to Elussa can learn it boarded the *Eye of Feronia*.

If they deal with Elussa aboard the *Sun Diver*, the PCs have enough time left in the trip to rest for 8 hours before event 3.

If the *Sun Diver* moves close to the fake debris but doesn't stop, Elussa uses wake rider to move along with the *Sun Diver*, attacking the PCs when they disembark on the Crucible. The asteray attacks both the group and their foes, moving around the station and sowing chaos.

Story Award: Even if the PCs choose to avoid Elussa's trap, award them 25,600 XP as if they defeated the asteray.

Countdown: Subtract 1 from the countdown if the PCs engage this encounter in a way that forces them to face Elussa.

EVENT 3: EXCORIATION PHOENIX (CR 12)

As the PCs' vessel nears the Crucible, passive sensors detect a huge starship nearby. The PCs might know that actively

scanning the approaching starship could make it harder to use their *antipathy transponder*, which the anassanois advised them to use to avoid contact with efreeti vessels. If they risk an active scan, a successful DC 20 Computers check is enough to identify the approaching starship as an Excoriation Combine Alcazar (see the inside covers of this volume) named the *Phoenix*. The starship is on its way to the Burning Archipelago, carrying a few efreeti nobles who want to join the attack. As the *Sun Diver* approaches the *Phoenix*, the cruiser cuts its thrusters, comes to a stop, and prepares to enter the Drift. Unless alerted to the *Sun Diver*'s presence—either by PC actions or via PC failure on the Piloting checks to successfully avoid notice via the *antipathy transponder*—the *Phoenix* enters the Drift 1 minute later.

Starship Combat: If the crew on the *Phoenix* becomes aware of the *Sun Diver*, the cruiser ceases entering the Drift and attacks. During the battle, the crew uses comms to alert the Crucible. Preventing the enemy crew from doing so requires a PC in the science officer role to succeed at a DC 28 Computers check each round of starship combat.

The *Phoenix*'s plasma torpedoes and any weapon on the *Sun Diver* that fires physical ammunition have a maximum range equal to the weapon's range increment. After that distance, physical ammo disintegrates into the sun.

Losing shields in the sun can be deadly. At the end of a round in which a starship's shields are reduced to 0 remaining Shield Points, that vessel takes 5 damage from exposure to solar forces. The ship takes 10 damage at the end of each subsequent round it remains at 0 Shield Points. Creatures inside an affected ship are exposed to extreme heat (*Core Rulebook* 403) with 1 starship combat round equal to 1 minute. The inside of such a ship is also bathed in low radiation (*Core Rulebook* 403).

If the *Phoenix* takes any Hull Point damage, its crew focuses on maintaining shields and retreating by entering the Drift. At that point, if they have failed to warn the Crucible, their communication is likely to come after forces on the base are already well aware of the PCs' presence.

Story Award: Whether the PCs defeat, drive off, or evade the *Phoenix*, award the group 19,200 XP.


Countdown: Subtract 1 from the countdown if the PCs engage the *Phoenix* in starship combat.

PART 2: INTO THE CRUCIBLE

As the *Sun Diver* approaches the Crucible, read or paraphrase the following.

"We're close now, y'all," says the *Sun Diver*'s computer. "Bringin' up a visual. It's an extrapolation—this plasma makes a true image, uh, difficult."

ELUSSA

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A visual model of the Crucible becomes visible on a viewscreen, a similar representation of the Far Portal hovering a short distance away. The Crucible is a floating, disc-shaped structure with domes rising from its surface, the whole thing encased in a bubble like those surrounding the enclaves of the Burning Archipelago. Within the domes—the central of which is the largest—are myriad structures and passages. From the top of the central dome rises a spire with a spherical structure at its summit, while a similar spire-and-sphere structure descends from beneath the station. From these twin orb-spikes, beams of coruscating energy stream out to strike the Far Portal where it rests slightly above and beyond the Crucible. Where it touches the ring, this energy splays out like clawed, five-fingered hands.

Active scans can penetrate the station's domes only enough to acquire a general model of the structure—from the outside, it's impossible to gain details on the precise layout or resident life-forms. With an active scan or examination of the model, the PCs find a landing pad 200 feet in diameter on the "southwestern" side of the station (if orienting so that the Far Portal represents "north"). This pad has no dome, and active scans penetrate it better, so the PCs can discern that an efreeti shuttle sits on the pad and no life-forms are present. The Crucible's outer bubble offers no barrier to the *Sun Diver*, but the interior domes are impenetrable to starships.

No one on the Crucible expects the PCs' arrival, and the inhabitants of the base think the Crucible is too deep in the sun to face assault from the Material Plane, so the PCs can easily

land unnoticed. If the PCs attempt any starship-scale attacks on the base, however, they deal little damage and alert the whole station. In addition, the Crucible's *planar tethers* can be used as vortex cannons (gunnery +17). Although it's remotely feasible that the PCs could destroy the *planar tethers* from the outside, doing so is beyond the scope of this adventure.

CRUCIBLE FEATURES

The Crucible was another abandoned bubble-site closer to the heart of the sun, but it now serves as an efreeti base. Its underlying structure is like the Core and platform of Noma (see *Starfinder Adventure Path #15: Sun Divers*). However, General Khaim's forces have heavily modified the structure, including a long rod-like tower that pierces the Crucible through its heart. At the top and bottom, this tower houses the workings of the *planar tethers*, which can be used to move the Far Portal back to the sun's surface—doing so requires either destroying the Crucible or using magical siccacite control rods carried by Commander Dmyr and General Khaim.

Due to the Crucible's small size, Khaim couldn't use the station as the primary base for his invasion. Instead, most of his fleet and military forces were based on the other side of the Far Portal, which once led to a remote section of the Plane of Fire. It now leads to a military base in the Sovereignty of the Crimson Sun. Indeed, Khaim's primary objective in attacking the Burning Archipelago is to make it a beachhead for control of the entire sun and, if necessary, further invasion of the Pact Worlds.

The Crucible's main purpose is to keep the Far Portal in one location and control who enters it, but it also serves as

a manufacturing facility. It has assembly lines to construct robots and military hardware, barracks for elite sentinels, a brig, living and training areas for Khaim's favorite war beasts (fierce striped creatures from the Plane of Fire called vahdus—see page 14), and a smaller ancient portal repurposed for travel to the Plane of Fire.

The Crucible has the following common features. Exceptions to these generalities are noted in the areas where they occur.

Bubbles and Domes: A bubble surrounds the Crucible, but is permeable to vessels with solar-acclimated shields, much like on Noma. The domes are stronger. Most of the facility is within a central dome, but the landing pad (area **1**) has no dome, and the forge (area **23**) and robotics (area **24**) each have a dome. Tunnels connect the landing pad and domes to one another.

Ceilings, Floors, and Walls: In most rooms and hallways, the ceiling is 20 feet high. All ceilings, floors, and walls are starship bulkheads. See page 408 of the *Core Rulebook* if you need statistics for these structures.

Comms and Alarms: Security on the Crucible is a bit lax. General Khaim didn't expect his enemies to be able to find the base or travel to it. The staff is minimized due to the assault on the Burning Archipelago. Most people staffing the Crucible have personal comm units. They can use these to inform others of danger, but doing so during combat requires a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity, and any attempt to use a comm unit in this manner is obvious to nearby observers.

If someone manages to contact allies elsewhere in the Crucible, the station goes on alert. This alert isn't obvious to intruders—no claxons or flashing lights. Such an alert changes

little in the locations of encounters in the Crucible, but alerted enemies are vigilant and harder to surprise. In addition, the off-duty Crucible Guards in the barracks (areas **14–19**) form two additional patrols, each comprised of one azer, one ifrit, and one salamander. The sergeants (see *Crucible Inhabitants* on page 11) stay in contact with these patrols and up the alert level if one stops reporting in—in such a situation, the sergeants themselves gather with the ifrit and vahdus in area **22** to form a group to seek out and eliminate the intruders (a roughly CR 13 encounter). You can change these responses and move other NPCs as you see fit.

The keyed presentation of the Crucible assumes no NPC has moved from their initial post. If NPCs begin to move around, the duty rosters PCs can find become inaccurate.

Doors: Most doors are steel and unlocked, although several doors are airlocks (*Core Rulebook* 408). Locked doors are usually biometric, with a few having a keypad for passcode entry. Lacking proper biometrics or codes, the PCs must succeed at a DC 30 Engineering check to rewire such a lock or a DC 30 Computers check to hack it. Crucible staff members have clearance (or passcodes) only to areas they can go unaccompanied (see the *Crucible Inhabitants* section). Locks also allow a user to hail those on the other side of the lock, much like a doorbell.

Environment: Except in the lower *planar tether* (areas **28–31**), the environment inside the Crucible is extreme heat (*Core Rulebook* 403), comfortable for the creatures here but requiring the PCs to use armor environmental protections to avoid damage. This heat hazard is also intended as a hint that resting for long periods inside the station is ill advised.



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Language: Ignan is the default language inside the Crucible. Computer files are in Ignan. The few who lack knowledge of Ignan, such as the void hags, use Common when speaking to others and their own languages when speaking to each other.

Light: Most areas have bright light, and most of that comes from skylights or windows that allow sunlight in.

Planar Travel: An inactive portal to the Plane of Fire is in area 13. Although this portal is currently closed, Commander Dmyr and Commissar Tarakah can activate it and call for reinforcements. Creatures subjected to *dismissal* and ejected from the Crucible back to the Plane of Fire could activate the portal from the other side and walk back through with reinforcements.

A permanent *planar barrier* protects the elevator (area 3), the *planar tethers* (areas 25–31), and the elevator shafts that travel between them. Khaim had this countermeasure put in place more to keep the void hags in than interlopers out.

Resting: The only place where the PCs can safely rest for more than an hour or so is in the *planar tethers* (areas 25–31) once they're cleared or the hags become temporary allies. In other areas, it's possible that other Crucible inhabitants move through or near enough to cause trouble, although it's up to you as GM to determine if and when that happens.

CRUCIBLE COUNTDOWN

Subtract 1 from the countdown for each hour in game the PCs take to finish the adventure, rounding up to the next whole hour. For most noncombat situations, especially if your group roleplays extensively, use real time to estimate. For skill uses and combat, use times given in the *Core Rulebook* or in this adventure.

CRUCIBLE INHABITANTS

The PCs have ample opportunity to gain information from and insight on their foes. What various inhabitants of the Crucible know and the security clearances they hold (if any) are detailed here for ease of reference, along with details that can aid in roleplaying these NPCs.

This section is structured in order of least knowledgeable to most. Unless otherwise specified, those later in the list know what those who come earlier on the list do, and have access to all the systems their earlier counterparts do, with exceptions and specifics given in individual entries.

It's clear to everyone on the Crucible that the Burning Archipelago is to be a beachhead for General Khaim's control of Mataras. Everyone also knows that the Far Portal's relocation is twofold—it's located on the Material Plane near the Crucible and on the Plane of Fire near Sunset Base, General Khaim's marshaling point on that plane. Deactivating the *planar tethers* would change its position back to its original point, nowhere near the Crucible or Sunset base. (Even failing to acquire confirmation from another source, any PC who hears about the Far Portal's new connection points can infer its relationship to the *planar tethers* with a successful DC 26 Mysticism check.)


Two other general notes apply to the inhabitants: Military personnel have conventional armor, but these suits are black

with brass fittings and bear the symbol of the Malikah (a stylized crimson six-pointed star) as a badge on the chest. Also, the efreet on the Crucible are naturally Large but maintain Medium size using their change shape ability. Their gear is sized for their smaller forms.

Cadets: The four "adolescent" salamanders working as servants here are "elite" among other trainees back home and earned the right to serve on the Crucible for a time. They are loyal but easily intimidated by powerful PCs. These salamanders know Khaim answers only to the Malikah, a semi-divine efreeti they have never met but who rules the Sovereignty of the Crimson Sun, an empire on the Plane of Fire. They also know the general layout of the main dome (areas 2–22), the general makeup of the garrison, and the names of all the senior staff, including Sergeant Pludd (male salamander), Sergeant San (female ifrit), Commissar (major rank) Tarakah (female efreeti), Chief Zamun (male azer), and Commander Dmyr (male efreeti). These salamanders have only heard rumors about the three hags, and are terrified of them.

Crucible Guard: Conscripts or slaves of the efreet, members of the Crucible Guard are nevertheless elite warriors charged with staffing the fortress. They include five azers, four ifrits, and four salamanders. The salamanders are belligerent, considering themselves superior to the others. The azers are dedicated enough to act as glue in units, especially when the ifrits—many of whom are conscripts rather than slaves—start to resent the surly salamanders. Some among the Crucible Guard, especially the salamanders, dislike their efreeti masters, but even the bitterest guard members remain loyal thanks to the relative comfort and high status they enjoy. If coerced into revealing information after a defeat, Crucible Guards have been to most areas of the Crucible except the *planar tethers* and the cell block (when relaying prisoners, they stay in area 4). These sentries know all the officers on the station, as well as where those commanders usually are, including Sergeant Pludd (area 17), Sergeant San (area 21 or 22), Commissar Tarakah (area 11 or 6), Chief Zamun (area 9, 24, or 25), and Commander Dmyr (area 12 or 25). The rank-and-file fear Commissar Tarakah, who watches them all, and they know the hags are present on the Crucible in the lower *planar tether* but lack insight as to why. None of these warriors know the hags by name. Azers and salamanders have the passwords for the computer in robotics (area 24). Ifrits know the passwords for computers in medical (area 21) and control panels in the training area (area 22).

Sergeants: Pludd and Demjit San, sergeants who oversee lower-ranking personnel and beasts, have visited the high *planar tether* for staff meetings and have seen the cell block, but they know no details on the prisoners there. These two know the nicknames of the hags—Daughter Drift, Mother Maelstrom, and Old Nanite—but know nothing else about them. Like the lower-ranking staff, the sergeants distrust and dislike Commissar Tarakah. The sergeants' biometrics allow them to open most locks in the main dome, except area 4 and



any locked door in the command section (areas 8–12). The sergeants can request that the elevator (area 3) go to area 25, but the elevator does so only if an officer there approves.

Efreeti Lieutenants: On the Crucible, four efreeti officers—Lieutenants Ahdzahl, Iwos, Gahmnee, and Zarra—are loyal to General Khaim and the Malikah, although they serve primarily as backup staff for senior officers. Even in defeat, the efreet are insufferably haughty and optimistic about the attack on the Burning Archipelago, remaining defiant to conventional means of interrogation. They all know the void hags helped build the *planar tethers* and that Khaim has some sort of hold over the hags. The efreet also know much of the truth about the Malikah (see pages 44–45), although none know her true name. Khaim, they say, is the Malikah's favored leader. Like most on the Crucible, the efreet give Commissar Tarakah a wide berth. These officers know the passcode for the locks and computer in the brig (area 4) and the names and appearances of the prisoners kept in the cell block (area 5). Each lieutenant's biometrics allows the elevator (area 3) to go up to area 25.

Chief Zamun: Dmyr's confidant and Engineering Chief, Zamun is as responsible for overseeing the construction of the *planar tethers* as the void hags. He knows how to operate and maintain the tethers and also about the siccitate control rods and how to use them to direct the tethers. Zamun also knows about the hags, why they're here, and how they were imprisoned with Daughter Drift's help. The azer also has Mother Maelstrom's robes. Chief Zamun considers Dmyr to be a friend and is loyal to the commander more than to Khaim. He has heard the stories about the Malikah, her origins, and her favoritism regarding Khaim, but Zamun believes he'll live longer if he makes himself invaluable at the Crucible and avoids front-line activity, whether political or military. Zamun is amicable with Commissar Tarakah, though mostly out of friendship with Dmyr. Chief Zamun's biometrics open locks except for the one preventing the elevator from going to the lower *planar tether* (area 28). He has root access to computers besides the one in the commissar's quarters (area 11) and his datapad could prove to be an asset in hacking other computers (see area 23).

Commander Dmyr: The Crucible's commander, Dmyr, knows General Khaim personally and has met the Malikah. Dmyr admires the Malikah's power but sees her obsession with her half-brother Ragathiel as beneath her. The commander has no qualms about conquering the sun, but doing so to one-up an empyreal lord seems wrongheaded. Dmyr wants to fight for glory and honor rather than oversee this station. Zamun would be his choice to take over command of the Crucible. Unlike most others here, Commander Dmyr has a collegial relationship with Commissar Tarakah.

Commander Dmyr has root access to computers on the station except the one in the commissar's quarters (area 11). Besides General Khaim, only Dmyr has a siccitate control rod that can unlock the lock that allows the elevator to the lower

planar tether (area 28) at will. He sometimes must do so, under Khaim's orders, to cast *wish* on the *Fivefold Cauldron*. Although loyal to the cause, Dmyr hates the idea of working with the hags and resents using his cosmic power on the cauldron. Eliminating the hags is one of Dmyr's top priorities. He has Daughter Drift's robes.

Commissar Tarakah: Having observed the Crucible and its staff for some time, Commissar Tarakah (a political and "morale" officer holding the rank of major) has detailed files on everyone. Tarakah is fiercely loyal to the Malikah and Khaim, and although she places the former above the latter in all things, the commissar prefers to remain the ally of both. Her knowledge is intrusive and obsessive, but she would rather die than give most of it up. Nevertheless, she knows as much about the hags as Zamun does. Tarakah also knows about the *Fivefold Cauldron* and the siccitate control rods. The commissar not only knows that the hags desire the return of their robes, but also wears one of them (Old Nanite's robes) as Khaim ordered. However, the commissar knows nothing of the true nature of the *Fivefold Cauldron*. She also has no knowledge of the current arrangement Khaim has with the hags. The commissar is no military strategist, but she assumes the assault on the Burning Archipelago is a no-win situation for the Malikah's enemies. Tarakah has root access for every computer in the Crucible, and her biometrics open locks other than the one blocking the elevator from going to area 28.

THE HAGS

The PCs need only to find a way to the hags to learn more from them. The hags know a few tidbits about the PCs from casting *vision* and anticipated the PCs would arrive at the Crucible, but withheld this prediction from Khaim, seeing it as a possible path to freedom. Given the chance, they propose an alliance with the PCs, directing the adventurers to their robes. In addition, Daughter Drift knows as much information from the Adventure Background as you wish to impart, though she doesn't reveal her complicity in capturing the other hags. All the hags know Khaim's background and ambitions, as well as the Malikah's, and believe the PCs are a dire threat to both—a thought that fills the hags with joy.

The hags have zero allegiance to their captors, and if they didn't yearn so greatly for the return of their robes, they could likely escape the Crucible. They have some desire to remain together as a coven and retain the Crucible and the *Fivefold Cauldron*, and would desperately love to see Khaim come to ruin. For all these reasons, they choose to stay in the Crucible and offer the PCs a chance to recover their robes in exchange for helping shut down the *planar tethers*. Whether they then allow the PCs safe departure from the Crucible depends on whether the group decides not to oppose the hags' claim on the *Fivefold Cauldron* and the station.

This situation has a few other hitches. Each hag is cursed, unable to use the wish-based magic of the *Fivefold Cauldron*. Though they can speak as normal, each hag has

only a 50% chance of acting normally when within 90 feet of Commander Dmyr, Commissar Tarakah, or General Khaim. When able to act normally, each hag is also bound by a curse of lethargy (*Core Rulebook* 418) while within 90 feet of the named individuals. If any of these individuals dies from the direct actions of a hag (manipulating the PCs doesn't count), the hags also suffer a curse of the ravenous (*Core Rulebook* 418). The hags are prepared to do the work required to break this curse if it takes hold after the PCs deal with the efreit. In addition, Daughter Drift helped General Khaim find and capture Mother Maelstrom and Old Nanite, but the two older hags don't yet know this fact. If they were to learn the truth, they would encourage the PCs not to return Daughter Drift's robes, even though doing so would break their covenant. Regardless of what the hags might promise in order to manipulate the PCs, once General Khaim is defeated, the hags try to take the *Fivefold Cauldron* for themselves.

CRUCIBLE PATROLS (CR 11)

A unit of Crucible Guards patrols passageways within the main dome, although they don't expect to find anything and are lax in their duties until proven wrong. The patrol might be found in any hallway, numbered or otherwise, and sometimes passes through areas **2**, **4**, **8**, **14**, and **21**. Patrolling soldiers enter other areas only if they have a reason and the ability to do so. They have no security clearance.

The patrol shift changes every 8 hours, and patrols start to hunt for intruders if they run across evidence of them. The adventure assumes that if the PCs encounter a patrol, they first do so on their own terms, rather than the patrol initiating an alert and seeking out intruders. A given patrol has three members, selected from among the following creatures, although the azers usually take shifts in the forge (area **23**) or robotics (area **24**), and the ifrits usually command the Crucible's three vahdus. The initial patrol on duty when PCs arrive has a salamander, an ifrit, and a vahdu, and the members of this patrol are accounted for in the number of Crucible Guards.

AZER CRUCIBLE GUARD CR 8

4,800 XP

Azer mechanic (*Starfinder Adventure Path #13: Fire Starters* 55)
LN Medium outsider (extraplanar, fire)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +14

DEFENSE HP 115 RP 4
EAC 20; **KAC** 21

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

Immunities fire; **SR** 19

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee sintered handaxe +18 (2d6+10 S; critical burn 2d4)

Ranged fighter handcoil +18 (1d10+8 E & F; critical arc 1d10)

Offensive Abilities elemental fire, overload (DC 18),
target tracking

TACTICS

Before Combat Azers given the opportunity activate their energy shield before combat.

During Combat The azers like melee, preferring to focus on the target they're tracking. An azer might take the time to use overload against a particularly potent weapon.

Morale These azers have steely loyalty and steady nerves. They fight to the death when they must, covering their allies and retreating only if tactics or officers dictate a change in battleground.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Athletics +16, Computers +21, Engineering +21,
Physical Science +21, Piloting +16

Languages Common, Ignan

Other Abilities artificial intelligence (exocortex), expert rig (armor upgrade), mechanic tricks (energy shield [22 HP], neural shunt), miracle worker 1/day, remote hack (DC 18)

Gear d-suit III, fighter handcoil^{AR} with two batteries (20 charges each), sintered handaxe^{AR}, personal comm unit

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Elemental Fire (Su) Azers can cause any weapon they wield to deal half its damage as fire damage, making them neither archaic nor nonlethal. If the weapon already deals two damage types, this effect replaces one with fire. In addition, azers can grant weapons they wield the burn 2d4 critical hit effect. If the weapon has any other critical hit effects, the azer chooses only one to apply on a critical hit.

IFRIT CRUCIBLE GUARD CR 8

4,800 XP

Ifrit solarian (*Starfinder Adventure Path #13: Fire Starters* 60)
LN Medium outsider (native)

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

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

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

Resistances fire 5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee solar weapon +20 (3d6+10 S; critical knockdown)

Ranged wave modulator III +17 (2d4+8 F or So)

Offensive Abilities flashing strikes, stellar revelations (black hole [25-ft. radius, pull 15 ft., DC 16], corona [2d6 F, cold resistance 10], gravity surge [+24], supernova [10-ft. radius, 9d6 F, DC 16])

Ifrit Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th)
2/day—overheat (DC 16)

TACTICS

During Combat Ifrits prefer melee combat, using their revelations and overheat ability to harm and move around multiple enemies.

Morale The price of cowardice can mean death in Khaim's

army, but the ifrits know the value of a strategic retreat. Wounded ifrits often try to fall back to warn other allies, and they allow the brave azers to cover them.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Acrobatics +21, Athletics +16, Mysticism +16

Languages Common, Ignan

Other Abilities fire affinity, solar manifestation (solar weapon), stellar alignment

Gear d-suit III, wave modulator III^{AR} with two batteries (20 charges each), minor graviton crystal, personal comm unit

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fire Affinity (Su) Once per day, an ifrit making an attack that deals fire damage can roll a single attack roll twice and use the higher result.

SALAMANDER CRUCIBLE GUARD CR 8

4,800 XP

Salamander soldier (*Starfinder Adventure Path #14: Soldiers of Brass* 60)

NE Medium outsider (extraplanar, fire)

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

DEFENSE

HP 125

EAC 25; **KAC** 27

Fort +12; **Ref** +8; **Will** +9

DR 5/magic; **Immunities** fire

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee advanced pike +20 (2d8+12 P; critical bleed 1d8) or tail slap +20 (3d4+12 B & F plus grab; critical burn 2d4)

Ranged snub scattergun +17 (1d12+8 P; critical burn 2d4)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with advanced pike)

Offensive Abilities charge attack, elemental fire, fighting styles (blitz), gear boosts (brutal blast +4)

TACTICS

During Combat Salamanders are content to let other fools fight in closer combat, preferring to keep enemies at reach. They aren't concerned about catching an ally in a scattergun blast, either.

Morale The salamanders fight more out of bloodthirst than loyalty or bravery, and this trait might cause them to wait too long to retreat. However, they aren't averse to allowing allies, especially azers, to cover a withdrawal.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Athletics +21, Engineering +16, Intimidate +16

Languages Common, Ignan

Gear d-suit III, advanced pike, snub scattergun with 16 shells, incendiary grenade II, personal comm unit

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Elemental Fire (Su) See page 13.

VAHDU

CR 8

4,800 XP

N Large outsider (extraplanar, fire)

Init +6; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft. (scent), darkvision 60 ft.;

Perception +16

DEFENSE

HP 125

EAC 20; **KAC** 22

Fort +12; **Ref** +12; **Will** +7

Immunities fire

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +20 (2d8+12 F & P) or claw +20 (2d8+12 S)

TACTICS

During Combat A vahdu is a chase predator that prefers to charge and pounce on prey, going for a killing bite.

Morale Trained vahdus fight to the death, although they retreat with allies if ordered to do so.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Athletics +21, Stealth +16

Feats Jet Dash

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Pounce (Ex) When a vahdu charges, it can also make a full attack.

Story Award: If the PCs can avoid a patrol rather than face it, they receive XP as if they defeated it. They receive no more XP for that patrol even if they defeat it in combat again later.

1. LANDING PAD

An enormous circular landing pad is open to the atmosphere of the bubble surrounding the Crucible, lit by solar fire. Starship maintenance equipment lines the pad's edges, and a small, brass-hulled shuttle is parked in one corner. A tunnel leads northeast from a massive airlock at the pad's northeastern side.

If Rikard Girsten is with the PCs, he prefers to remain aboard the *Sun Diver*, unless you decide otherwise. Only if the PCs inform him Hazl, his wife, is alive after finding her in area 6, might he want to come into the Crucible after her (see pages 18–19 for details).

The efreeti shuttle is for the Crucible garrison, but it sees little use. If it becomes relevant to the PCs, use the stats for a Ringworks Wanderer (*Core Rulebook* 310). However, this shuttle can travel inside the sun like the *Sun Diver* and has a Signal Basic Drift engine (Drift 1).

Unless the station is already on alert when the PCs arrive, the airlock to the entry tunnel shown on the map is unlocked. Inside that tunnel, the airlock to the hall that leads to area 4 is locked.

2. CENTRAL CHAMBER (CR 10)

This massive round chamber, lit in cool blue from wall panels, centers on a large elevator. Eight massive double and single blast doors line the walls in every direction, and each set of double doors has a label. The walls and doors are of dark metal, reminiscent of the Core in Noma, while the elevator column is constructed of modern alloys and fittings. Carved into the floor is a stylized six-pointed star filled with red enamel, like the badge the occupiers of Kahlannal wore.

This central chamber in the Crucible is the main hub. Labels identify each set of double doors. The set leading to the landing pad (area **1**) is labeled as such, the set to area **4** "Brig," the set to area **8** "Command," the set to area **14** "Barracks," and the set to **21** "Medical."

A control panel flanks both sets of elevator doors. Each opens when the controls nearest it are activated.

Creatures: When the PCs first arrive in this room, they find two Crucible battle robots guarding it.

CRUCIBLE BATTLE ROBOTS (2) CR 8

XP 4,800 each

N Medium construct (technological)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 feet, low-light vision; **Perception** +17

DEFENSE HP 125 EACH

EAC 20; **KAC** 22

Fort +8 **Ref** +8; **Will** +5

Immunities construct
immunities, fire

Weaknesses vulnerable to critical hits,
vulnerable to electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee slam +20 (2d6+18 S)

Ranged disintegrator beam +18 (2d8+8 A;
critical corrode 1d6)

TACTICS

During Combat The robots attack their enemies from both sides. They prefer melee combat and coordinate with each other to flank.

Morale The robots fight until destroyed. They chase intruders to other areas.

STATISTICS

Str +6, **Dex** +4, **Con** —, **Int** +1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0

Skills Athletics +21, Intimidate +16

Languages Ignan

Other Abilities incendiary self-destruct
(10 ft., 5d6 F & P, DC 16)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Disintegrator Beam (Ex) A Crucible battle robot has a disintegrator beam as a natural weapon built into

one of its arms. This beam has a range increment of 30 feet and prevents the robot from wielding any item that requires two hands.

Incendiary Self-Destruct (Ex) When a Crucible battle robot's Hit Points drop to 15 or fewer, it starts an audible and visible charge-up sequence and explodes on its next turn in a 10-foot-radius burst, even if it has been destroyed. Creatures in the area take 5d6 fire and piercing damage (Reflex DC 16 half). As a full action that provokes attacks of opportunity, a creature adjacent to the robot can attempt a DC 26 Engineering check to disarm the self-destruct mechanism before it detonates. The self-destruct also can be deactivated at any time

if the robot receives a verbal command from another creature designated as the robot's commander, although a robot that has 0 Hit Points can't register this command.

Development: Fighting here for at least 3 rounds alerts the Crucible guards in area **14**. They move to investigate and then join in the battle during the fourth round.

However, the guards can't hear the fighting if the PCs draw the robots into an area that doesn't adjoin area **14**. In any case, if the guards come here and start to lose the battle, they try to retreat to area **14** and beyond for reinforcements.

EVENT 4: HAG CONTACT

Once the PCs defeat the robots and foes that join the battle, read or paraphrase the following.

A feeling of being watched permeates the air. Suddenly and telepathically, a feminine voice exclaims, "They're here! Oh, look at them! So tasty!"

"Calm yourself, dear sister!" says another, deeper feminine voice. "They don't look like that much to me."

"Ladies, our opinions matter little, but politeness does," says yet a third feminine voice, between the first two in clarity but wispier than either. "We come to them for their help, remember?"



CRUCIBLE BATTLE
ROBOT

ASSAULT
ON THE
CRUCIBLE

PART 1:
THE
COUNTDOWN
BEGINS

PART 2:
INTO THE
CRUCIBLE

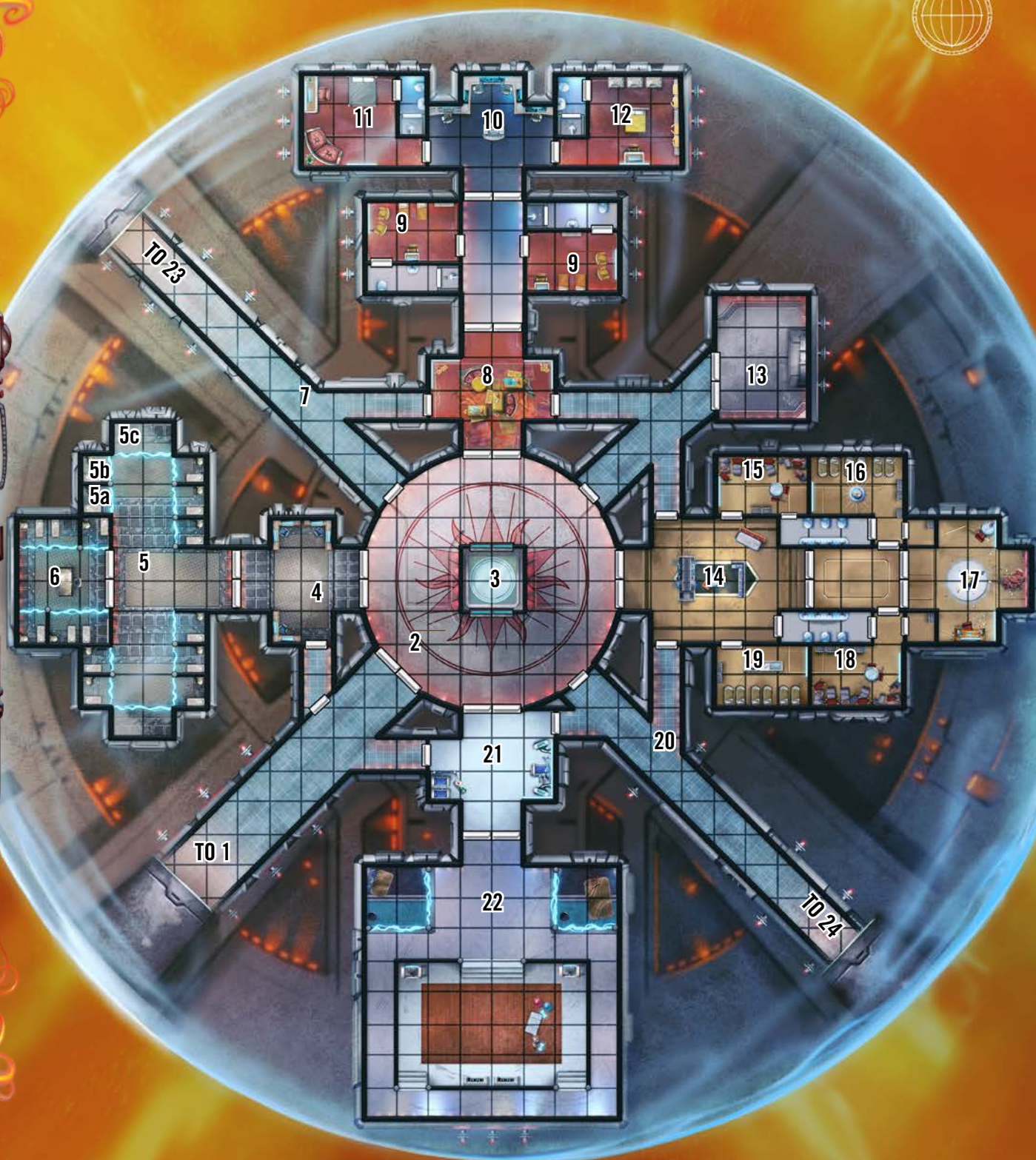
CONTINUING
THE CAMPAIGN

THE PLANE
OF FIRE

ALIEN
ARCHIVES

CODEX OF
WORLDS

THE CRUCIBLE: MAIN DOME



1 SQUARE = 10 FEET

ASSAULT
ON THE
CRUCIBLEPART 1:
THE
COUNTDOWN
BEGINSPART 2:
INTO THE
CRUCIBLECONTINUING
THE CAMPAIGNTHE PLANE
OF FIREALIEN
ARCHIVESCODEX OF
WORLDS

The void hags have used the *clairvoyance/clairaudience* capabilities of their coven, along with the *telepathy* ability augmented by the *Fivefold Cauldron* (see area **28**, page 34). After niceties, the hags make a clear offer of mutual aid. They can offer direction and other information, including using their extrasensory perception and telepathy to guide the PCs away from guard patrols. In exchange, the PCs must reacquire each hag's robes. The hags are truthful about their situation, attempting to establish some trust. They admit they would invite the PCs to their home for "tea and cakes," but getting to area **28** could prove very difficult. The hags know the elevator has serious locks, especially for anyone going to the lower level, but they don't know about its traps.

If the PCs agree, the hags can tell the group where each robe is and who has it. Commissar Tarakah has one in area **10**, Chief Zamun has one in area **23**, Commander Dmyr has one in area **25**. The coven is likely to point toward Commander Dmyr last, hoping the PCs can acquire all the robes before becoming too interested in the *planar tethers*. Since they helped construct the *planar tethers* and the control rods, the hags know that using Dmyr's control rod in the machinery in area **28** can alert General Khaim. The hags want to have their robes before General Khaim returns, so if asked directly about the issue, they use a half-truth, saying the PCs need two rods to deactivate the *planar tethers*. Although they're sure General Khaim has his rod with him, they neglect that aspect of the truth, suggesting the PCs can find both rods on Commander Dmyr. When the PCs find only one rod on the commander, the hags act surprised and upset. They then "surmise" General Khaim could be drawn here by using Dmyr's control rod on the machinery in area **28**. They warn that the general is a formidable opponent, and that he might seek additional troops to hunt down the PCs, using the portal in area **13** to do so.

The hags can also maintain as much telepathic contact with—and provide as much clairvoyant aid to—the PCs as you wish. Once the PCs have Commander Dmyr's siccate control rod, the hags can also tell the PCs how the rod works and that they should use it to "come down for a visit" to area **28**. However, consider delaying the hags' revelations until the PCs ask, first giving the group the chance to find that information on their own via computers or other methods, if it seems like they're enjoying such investigations.

3. ELEVATOR (CR 13)

This enormous elevator made of black composite has one complex control panel with a biometric scanner and a physical mechanism that looks like the receptacle for a rod the size of a weapon haft. A six-pointed, stylized star adorns each wall to the east and west.

The elevator chimes as it opens. It can go up to area **25** or down to area **28**, but always stops in area **2** and opens its doors on its way between those locations. Although Khaim

was unconcerned with infiltration of the Crucible from outside, he put extreme measures in place to contain and isolate the void hags. Activating the elevator requires proper biometrics to go up and proper biometrics combined with a siccate control rod to go down. The control rod unlocks two separate physical locks—unlocking the deeper one without the rod requires dismantling the lock, a lengthy process.

Any PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Computers or Engineering check to analyze the control panel can learn its parameters. Such success also allows the PC to learn that the elevator chimes at its destination as it moves, signaling those at the destination. Success by 5 or more also lets the PC recognize that the elevator sends a security alert to command computers (areas **10** and **25**) if it moves without registering proper unlocking mechanisms. See the Development section for more on these aspects if they're allowed to work normally. Disabling either alert requires a successful DC 30 Computers or Engineering check that takes 5 rounds.

The locked panel has three other countermeasures. For the first two, see the Traps section. The third is a permanent *security seal*. Unlocking the panel to make the elevator go up without biometrics requires a successful DC 35 check with Computers (bypass) or Engineering (rewire). Unlocking the panel to make it go down requires reworking the biometric parameters, as above, and disabling the rod mechanism. Doing so requires two successful DC 45 Engineering checks, the first taking 1 minute and the second taking 2 rounds. For the purposes of a *knock* spell, the *security seal* counts as one method of closure, the biometrics count as one for each direction (two total), and the control rod lock counts as two. *Knock* disables the *security seal* for only 10 minutes, so it must be dealt with again after that time.

The elevator moves via antigravity rails. Its shaft goes 200 feet up to the high *planar tether* and 200 feet down to the low one, and the elevator moves 50 feet each round. Nanocarbon 2 inches thick (hardness 35, 120 HP) makes up the elevator's structure. If the PCs manage to break through and enter the shaft, climbing the perfectly smooth sides is impossible without aid. In addition, anyone trapped between the elevator and an end of the shaft takes 10d10 bludgeoning damage each round they remain so (Fortitude DC 21 half). Forcing open the doors in the shaft requires success at a DC 28 Athletics check (1 round) or Engineering check (5 rounds).

Traps: The elevator has two nanoflechette launchers (*Core Rulebook* 413), built into the crimson suns on the eastern and western walls. Each aperture opens on a point of the star.

Development: If the elevator pings its destination, the creatures at that end know someone is coming and can prepare. The hags gather in area **28**, but don't suspect intruders—despite their visions—unless other evidence leads them to do so. A command center notification in area **10** alerts Commissar Tarakah, and she gathers the lieutenants from area **9** and arrives here 2 minutes later. (See area **9**—one of the lieutenants might turn against Tarakah.) If Dmyr receives a notification, he

remains in the high *planar tether*, and the chime prevents him from being surprised. See his tactics in area **25**.

Story Award: Award the PCs 25,600 XP when they succeed in taking the elevator up and down or otherwise reach areas **25** and **28**, no matter how they did so.

4. BRIG PROCESSING (CR 10)

This room is shaped like a cross and has desks of dark composite and chairs in niches to the north and south. Each desk has a computer terminal. Double doors lead out to the east and west, and a smaller door stands in the eastern section of the southern wall.

The brig computer, a tier 5 system, can be accessed by either of the two consoles. The system has a security I upgrade (DC 34 to hack), a 24-hour lockout that activates after three failed attempts to access or hack the computer, an alarm that sends a signal to the interrogation room terminal (area **6**) and the command centers (areas **10** and **25**) if the lockout activates, and a single data module containing the records of prisoners held in the Crucible. A PC who gains access to the computer can see files on and the cell number of the current prisoners (and corpse; see area **5**) and access archived files on previous prisoners. Although doing so sends a notification to the interrogation room terminal, someone with access here can also control the environment of and force fields to the cells in area **5**, and lock or unlock doors in this room.

Creature: When the PCs first enter, the neotophet here activates and then pauses to look the PCs over. The only way to avoid attack is for one or more of the PCs to appear to be Crucible personnel. Doing so requires a successful DC 29 Disguise check. If fooled, the neotophet acts only if attacked or if it hears combat in areas **5** or **6**, which it joins.

NEOTOPHET

CR 10

XP 9,600

HP 165 (see page 56)

TACTICS

During Combat The neotophet tries to keep at least one enemy swallowed.

Morale Lacking contingency programming, the neotophet neither retreats nor tries to alert others in the station. It fights until destroyed.

Development: If the PCs cause a notification to be sent to area **6**, the creatures there come here to investigate. The doors here are thick, but if the PCs are extremely loud, the same creatures also come to check the situation.

5. BRIG

This long chamber has numerous cells, each blocked off with a force field. Each cell has a bunk and a lavatory unit. Sturdy double doors lead out of the room to the east and west.

Cells to the north and south are reserved for Large prisoners. Other cells are designed for smaller humanoids and can be climate-controlled so the inhabitants don't suffer from the Crucible's usual heat. Most are empty, but a few are not.

The force fields span the space shown on the map from floor to ceiling. They are essentially *walls of force*, although they cannot be dispelled.

As the PCs investigate the area, they learn the occupied cells have the following contents.

5a. Hulsa: The corpse of a hulsa, which looks like hollow brassy armor, has been placed on the bed in this room. If the force field lowers, frigid air escapes from the cell. Troops on the Crucible slew this fey when it ventured into the station alone, and Commissar Tarakah chose to keep its corpse for study. The computer in area **4** reports that hulsas are radiant fey connected to stars. This one was named Phlixyr. A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Mysticism check can identify this rare being without the need of the computer files. Such a PC knows hulsas usually have luminous hollows and they enjoy teaching others about the physical phenomena of the universe, and that they use their powers to bless the respectful and punish the insolent. This one would want to be burned in solar fire or, absent that privilege, cast into the void.

5b. Major Joss Astino: This male damaya lashunta is a former member of the Castrovel military who retired to Asanatown after the end of the formian wars. If necessary, use the stats for a mercenary commando (*Starfinder Pact Worlds* 175) for Major Astino. He can confirm that a human woman, Hazl, was in cell **5c**, but an efreeti officer and azer took her into the next room—an interrogation chamber—hours ago. (Unprompted, Astino reveals they're probably letting her sweat before another efreeti officer comes to talk to her again and play "good cop.") Overwhelmed by the psychic signals from within the sun, Joss chose to investigate on his own and ran afoul of the Brass Dragons, who sent



HULSA

him to the efreet as a possible in with General Malonio Kam, one of Asanatown's leaders with whom Astino is a friend. Commissar Tarakah has been "conditioning" Astino, but the major has not yet broken. He believes whatever is happening on the Crucible is the threat he and the other lashuntas of Asanatown have been preparing for all these years. He is willing to help the PCs, but he's in bad shape; he has half his maximum Hit Points and the exhausted condition. Nevertheless, Astino advocates finding a way to communicate with the Burning Archipelago. He's sure he can convince the veterans of Asanatown, who have been prepping for danger for years, to hold nothing back in the fight to repel the efreet. Either command center (areas **10** and **25**) has system-wide communications, as do the shuttle and *Sun Diver* in area **1**.

5c. Hazl Girsten: This cell is empty, although the bed is disheveled. The computer in area **4** notes the cell houses Hazl Girsten. She is an investigator from Stellacuna in the Burning Archipelago who discovered the Malikah Group with her husband, Rikard. The computer also notes Hazl is currently in area **6** for questioning.

Development: If the PCs cause any commotion, the creatures in area **6** come to investigate.

Story Award: If the PCs free Major Astino and facilitate his communication with Asanatown, award them 12,800 XP.

Countdown: If the PCs rescue Major Astino and he can communicate with the lashuntas of Asanatown, the veterans there unleash their decades of paramilitary preparation and pent-up aggression against General Khaim's forces. Add 2 to the countdown.

6. INTERROGATION CENTER (CR 10)

A desk stands in the center of this room, a chair on either side. The chair closest to the door has restraints. To the north and south are cells like those in the brig—two large and two smaller, all unfurnished. Only one has an active force field, while another's force-field generator is open and partially disassembled, parts of it lying among tools on the floor nearby. On the western wall is a cabinet.

The cell numbered **6a** holds Hazl Girsten, who is currently sitting against the northern wall and sweating. Her cell is not as hot as the ambient temperature in the Crucible, but it's hot enough to be uncomfortable.

The desk has a computer panel built into it horizontally. This console can access the brig system, yet it's the only one that can control the cell force fields in this room. If the PCs triggered a notification on this console from area **4**'s computers, that alert is still on the viewscreen.

Creatures: Presuming they didn't leave to investigate goings-on in other areas, an efreeti lieutenant named Iwos and an azer Crucible guard are here. The azer is performing maintenance on one of the cells' force-field generators.

EFREETI LIEUTENANT

CR 9

XP 6,400

Efreeti soldier (*Starfinder Adventure Path* #13: *Fire Starters* 59)

LE Medium (normally Large) outsider (extraplanar, fire)

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

HP 145 RP 4

EAC 22; **KAC** 24**Fort** +11; **Ref** +13; **Will** +10**Immunities** fire; **Resistances** cold 5**Weaknesses** vulnerable to cold**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (Su, perfect)**Melee** microerrated longsword +20 (2d10+13 S; critical bleed 2d6)**Ranged** *tactical magnetar rifle* +22 (2d8+9 P; critical burn 2d4)**Offensive Abilities** elemental fire, fighting styles (arcane assailant, hit-and-run), nimble fusillade, opening volley**Efreeti Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 9th, ranged +22)1/day—*explosive blast* (DC 16), *holographic image* (4th-level, DC 17)3/day—*invisibility*, *wall of fire*, *wish* (for non-genies only)At will—*detect magic*, *energy ray* (fire only), *overheat* (DC 14), *plane shift* (willing targets to the elemental planes, Astral Plane, or Material Plane only)**TACTICS****Before Combat** If drawn to area **4** or **5**, the efreeti turns invisible before going to check.**During Combat** The efreeti opens with *wall of fire* to cut off intruder escape, although he first uses *explosive blast* to fill area **4** with fire if the battle occurs there. He's likely to fly during the battle to stay out of enemy reach while taking advantage of nimble fusillade and duck and weave to remain mobile and make attacks.**Morale** When he drops to 25 or fewer Hit Points, the efreeti retreats toward area **14** and the reinforcements he expects to find in the barracks there and nearby. If he fails to find aid, he uses *plane shift* to escape certain death. (This adventure assumes he arrives on the Plane of Fire far enough from allies that he has no effect on further events at the Crucible.)**STATISTICS****Str** +4; **Dex** +6; **Con** +3; **Int** +1; **Wis** +2; **Cha** +3**Skills** Athletics +17, Intimidate +22, Mysticism +17**Languages** Aquan, Auran, Common, Ignan, Terran; telepathy 100 ft.**Other Abilities** change shape (humanoid), duck and weave, rune of the eldritch knight (tactical magnetar rifle)**Gear** d-suit III (mk 1 thermal capacitor), microerrated longsword, tactical magnetar rifle with 54 longarm rounds, personal comm unit**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Elemental Fire (Su)** See page 13.

AZER CRUCIBLE GUARD

CR 8

XP 4,800

HP 115 (see page 13)

TACTICS

Before Combat If accompanying the efreeti lieutenant to area **4** or **5**, the azer activates her energy shield before going.

During Combat The azer prefers melee combat and focusing her attacks, but she follows the efreeti's orders and protects him.

Morale The azer fights to the death, and even more fiercely to cover the efreeti's retreat, as she believes that death is her likely punishment if she fails to protect Iwos.

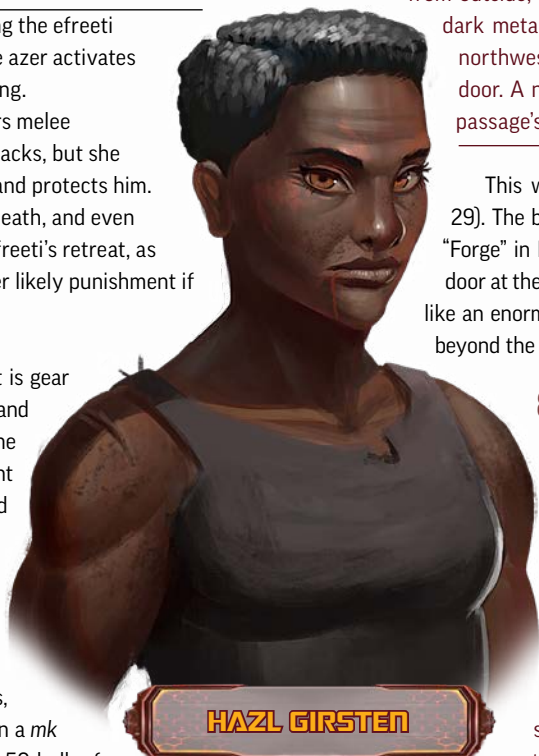
Treasure: Within the cabinet is gear that belongs to Hazl, Joss, and Rikard, as well as a small cache of efreeti arms. This equipment includes two suits of advanced lashunta tempweave, a suit of freebooter armor III, an aphelion laser pistol, 4 elite semi-auto pistols, a carbon staff, four incapacitators, 240 small arm rounds, 10 batteries, and 4 high-capacity batteries. In a *mk 2 null-space chamber* there are 50 bulk of field rations.

On the floor is a tool kit of tools specifically designed to maintain the Crucible. It grants its user a +2 circumstance bonus to Engineering checks to work on the Crucible, including disabling its devices.

Development: If freed from her cell, Hazl tries to acquire a weapon, armor, and other gear, but she doesn't know her possessions are in the cabinet here. Her story matches that of Rikard, who Hazl thinks is dead. If she learns different, she's elated, and if told Rikard is here at the Crucible, she wants to go to him as soon as possible. If the PCs use comms to allow her to talk to Rikard, he wants to come to her. She talks him out of it.

Like Rikard, if Hazl learns the Burning Archipelago is under attack, she wants to act. Hazl is determined, resourceful, and dedicated to doing the greater good, and thus more than willing to help the PCs if asked. If she joins them, use the stats for a mercenary commando (*Pact Worlds* 175) without lashunta racial traits. Her preference, however, is to take Joss Astino to the landing bay, commandeer the shuttle there, and flee the Crucible (with Rikard if possible) via the Drift, in hopes of being able to do more for her home's defense by taking Astino and her knowledge back to the Burning Archipelago. Allowing Hazl to follow this course of action is a sure way to facilitate Astino contacting his friends in Asanatown.

Story Award: If the PCs rescue Hazl, award them 12,800 XP.



7. FORGE PASSAGE

A transparent strip in the ceiling allows orange light in from outside, illuminating a broad passageway of dark metal and composite material that leads northwest. At the far end is a sturdy blast door. A narrower hall leads east close to the passage's southeastern end.

This wide hallway leads to area **23** (page 29). The blast door to the northwest is labeled "Forge" in Ignan. As the PCs approach the blast door at the northwestern end, they hear a sound like an enormous creature breathing coming from beyond the blast door.

8. OFFICER LOUNGE

This open, cross-shaped area has a clear ceiling allowing light in from the fiery sky. The walls are decorated with metallic posters that show efreeti artisans, pilots, or soldiers in heroic poses or symbols of industry or strength. Each poster is emblazoned with a short slogan, and they have a unified artistic style. Curving couches, tables that look like mahogany with brass

fittings, hookahs, and VR headsets furnish the room, along with rich carpets. To the west is a bar with a clear cabinet containing various jars and bottles, while the eastern area has a trivid display with a couch nearby. In a niche stands a statue of black obsidian veined with red, depicting an imperious horned woman in fine robes.

This is a common area for officers assigned to the Crucible. Everything is made of metal or fireproof composites.

The poster slogans are in Ignan, saying things such as, "Khaim lived, Khaim lives, Khaim will live forever!", "Each hammer strike is a blow against the enemy!" and "The starship to victory—and the Malikah is the pilot!"

Treasure: The obsidian statue depicts the Malikah, and it is fine work worth 1,500 credits. Refreshments in the bar area are delicacies from the Plane of Fire, and most have flavors that most humanoids find unpalatable. However, the bar also has a *mk 3* culinary synthesizer (*Armory* 129) with a cache of 3,000 UPBs.

Development: Extremely loud noises might alert officers in nearby rooms (areas **9**). If alerted, they could investigate.

9. OFFICER BARRACKS (CR 9+)

This large chamber, lit by a skylight, holds three beds, each with a coverlet of black and crimson decorated with a gold

motif of a six-pointed star. At the foot of each bed is a chest of dark material fitted with brass, and brass weapon racks are mounted on the walls above each bed. The room also contains three desks made of material like that of the chests and rich carpeting. Everything looks meticulously tidy. Another door is set in the wall near a far corner.

The narrow adjoining rooms are lavatories.

Creatures: As General Khaim attacks the Burning Archipelago, most of the officers are on duty. However, a couple of lieutenants are at rest here—the male efreeti Ahdzahl to the west and the female efreeti Gahmnee to the east. Their weapons are on the racks mounted on the walls. Nevertheless, they immediately attack interlopers.

If a battle breaks out in either room, or other loud and unusual noises occur here, the efreeti in the nearby room investigates, moving from his or her room at the start of the second round, increasing the CR of this encounter to CR 11. In addition, Commissar Tarakah moves out of area **10** (she is invisible) at the start of the third round, raising the CR to 12.

If the PCs seem to be winning handily and Tarakah is wounded, Gahmnee tries to kill the commissar. Ahdzahl is shocked, but Gahmnee assures him he's in no danger. Ahdzahl hesitates to help Tarakah against Gahmnee, instead continuing to focus on the PCs. However, the PCs might be able to influence him to cover himself by helping Gahmnee ensure Tarakah's demise. A PC who succeeds at a DC 32 Intimidate check to suggest Ahdzahl is going to pay if Tarakah survives causes Ahdzahl to do just that.

EFREETI LIEUTENANT

CR 9

XP 6,400

HP 145 (see page 19)

TACTICS

Before Combat An efreeti drawn into the fight might arrive invisible.

During Combat These efreet use flight to outmaneuver foes, and both use *explosive blast* as soon as they can. They use *wall of fire* to cordon the battlefield, preventing the PCs from retreating and likely covering the entrance of potential allies by making doors hard to see.

Morale These officers flee only if Commissar Tarakah is defeated, orders them to flee, or is otherwise gone. Once the commissar is gone, the lieutenants continue fighting the PCs until each has 30 or fewer Hit Points. They then try to retreat to area **14** for reinforcements.

Treasure: The brass chests at the end of each bed contain the efreet's clothing and personal effects, as well as 10 magazines of 18 longarm rounds each for magnetar rifles. Personal effects include efreeti jewelry and fancy grooming paraphernalia worth 10,000 credits in each room (20,000 total). In addition, Gahmnee has an *invisibility detector* (*Starfinder Armory* 83) installed in her armor.

Development: If captured after helping kill Tarakah, Gahmnee willingly reveals only that she hated the commissar. Making her divulge more requires coercing the hostile efreeti or using magic. Gahmnee, who comes from a military family, believes her older brother was arrested, exiled, and later killed as an outlaw because of Tarakah. Being given the opportunity to take revenge doesn't improve her attitude toward the PCs, however.

10. COMMAND CENTER (CR 0 OR 10)

The door to this area is locked.

A few small skylights let light in from above, but the massive view screen on the northern wall provides more illumination, showing images of the Far Portal, the Burning Archipelago, and Far Station, along with telemetry and other bits of changing information. Below this screen is a long console and a few chairs, including one sized for a giant. Smaller consoles line other walls.

This served as the Crucible's only command center until the high *planar tether* was finished. Every door out of it is locked. The information on the view screen might give some indication of how the fight is going at the Burning Archipelago.

The computer here has three workstations. It is tier 6 with a security I upgrade (DC 38 to hack) with one secure data module. If someone fails to access the system, a silent alarm sends a notification to the computer in area **25** and to Commander Dmyr's and Commissar Tarakah's personal comm units. A PC who has access to this system can cancel alarms anywhere on the station.

The data module contains records of the Crucible since Khaim took it over, mostly in the form of maintenance reports, personnel records, and occasional inspections. If the PCs search for data on Khaim, other personnel, or the Malukah, they can find files on those people, along with holographic images. The Malukah appears in a few images of a ceremony christening the station. Also among these files is a current duty roster. If the PCs want to find out where an NPC is on the station, this roster says where.

A somewhat outdated schematic of the station—it doesn't include the *planar tethers* and elevator—can be found in the module. From these schematics, the PCs can learn that the station receives all its energy from the sun, through its shielding bubble.

This computer has access to the computers in the brig processing area (area **4**), medical bay (area **21**), forge (area **23**), and robotics (area **24**). Accessing those systems requires either hacking them separately (see each area for DCs and other functions of those systems) or gaining root access to this computer. A PC who gains access to any of those machines from here can reset their passcodes and engage their operations, such as shutting down force fields in the brig. This computer can also unlock any lock other than the one that allows the elevator to go to area **28**, and can activate or

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deactivate the portal in area **13**. A separate file accompanying the station schematic identifies the portal's destination as Sunset Base, an efreeti military base on the Plane of Fire.

Creature: If not drawn into fighting in other areas, Commissar Tarakah stands in front of the large view screen, watching information slowly come in about efreeti efforts against the Burning Archipelago. Unless the station is on alert, she doesn't expect interlopers. If allowed, she takes a moment to speak with the PCs, sizing them up for the kill. Excruciatingly arrogant, Tarakah reveals her paranoia in asking if the PCs are here to "assassinate" her.

COMMISSAR TARAKAH CR 10

XP 9,600

Efreeti operative (*Starfinder* Adventure Path #13: *Fire Starters* 59)

LE Medium (normally Large) outsider (extraplanar, fire)

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.;

Perception +20

DEFENSE HP 150 **RP** 5

EAC 23; **KAC** 24

Fort +11; **Ref** +12; **Will** +13; +2 vs. mind-affecting effects

Defensive Abilities evasion, uncanny agility; **Immunities** fire; **Resistances** cold 10

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

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

Melee incapacitator +21 (3d4+15 B; critical staggered) or advanced retractable spike +21 (3d4+15 P; critical burn 2d4)

Ranged elite semi-auto pistol +21 (3d6+10 P; critical burn 2d4)

Offensive Abilities debilitating trick, elemental fire, operative specialization (detective), trick attack +5d8

Efreeti Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th, ranged +21)

1/day—*bestow curse* (DC 19), *explosive blast* (DC 19), *holographic image* (4th-level, DC 20)

3/day—*invisibility*, *wall of fire*, *wish* (for non-genies only)

At will—*detect magic*, *energy ray* (fire only), *overheat* (DC 17), *plane shift* (willing targets to the elemental planes, Astral Plane, or Material Plane only)

TACTICS

Before Combat Given time to prepare, Tarakah uses her *invisibility* spell-like ability on herself before starting the fight. If she can talk to (that is, stall) the PCs before engaging them here, she can use *invisibility* during a surprise round if she succeeds at a Bluff check against their Sense Motive checks.

During Combat Tarakah flies, avoids melee, and tries to keep allies between her and attackers. She uses *wall of fire* to divide her foes and targets enemies that look like the support, especially healers. Tarakah saves at least one use of *invisibility* for her escape.

Morale Tarakah fears her superiors more than PCs, but she doesn't wish to die here. If reduced to fewer than 30 Hit Points, she uses *invisibility* on herself and tries to flee to area **14**, rousing allies to help. If *invisibility* works poorly, she resorts to trying *plane shift*, unaware of her curse. If she finds herself at the PCs' mercy, she spitefully uses her last breath to curse one of them.

STATISTICS

Str +5; **Dex** +7; **Con** +2; **Int** +3; **Wis** +1; **Cha** +4

Skills Athletics +20, Bluff +25 (+29 with trick attack), Intimidate +25, Mysticism +20, Sense Motive +25

Languages Aquan, Auran, Common, Ignan, Infernal, Terran; telepathy 100 ft.

Other Abilities change shape (humanoid), operative exploits (glimpse the truth, stunning shot [DC 19])

Gear freebooter armor III (retractable spike [bracer], mk 2 thermal capacitor, *Old Nanite's robes*), elite semi-auto pistol with 24 rounds, incapacitator with 2 batteries (20 charges each), personal comm unit

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Elemental Fire (Su) See page 13.

Old Nanite's Robes (Su) Old Nanite's robes are integrated into Tarakah's armor like a cloak, functioning as a worn hybrid item. These sleek robes display complex, shifting patterns, yet true to the hag's name, the fractal designs are the result of the item's molecules constantly moving and never bonding into a stable form. See the Void Hag Robes sidebar on page 24 for further details. Tarakah is unaware the robes are cursed.

11. COMMISSAR'S QUARTERS

The door to this area is locked.

A large bed stands against one wall, covered in black. A high desk made of brass and composite resembling dark wood stands against the opposite wall, with a matching chair. Over it, on a brass rack, rests a long, scoped rifle. Placed against another wall is a wardrobe of black panels, its doors shut. In the northeastern corner is a door.

The northeastern door leads to a private lavatory.



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Tarakah's desk contains a computer that is a tier 5 system with a security II module (DC 35 to hack). Each failed attempt to access the computer silently sends a notification to the commissar's personal comm unit. After three failed attempts, a lockdown activates, lasting for 24 hours and wiping the secure data module. This computer has access to the Crucible's main system (through the computer in area 10), and through it, much of the Crucible. Firewalls (DC 37 to hack) protect the secure data module and access to the main system. The secure data module contains Tarakah's reports, correspondence, and files on personnel in the Crucible.

The commissar is meticulous in collecting intelligence, so her files are long, including details from known associates and signs of disloyalty to personal habits, tastes, dress, and relationships. Most of what she knows, per the Crucible Inhabitants section (page 12), is here, including details on the function of the *planar tethers* and the Far Portal's new location, along with additional information that might be of interest to the PCs, as follows.

Commander Dmyr: The commissar is envious of the commander and watches him carefully, looking for any sign of disloyalty to General Khaim or the Malikah. In this, however, she has been disappointed. She has recorded the commander's periodic visits to the void hag coven. Tarakah doesn't know why Dmyr visits the hags, although she knows it's on behalf of General Khaim. Tarakah also knows the commander has one of the hags' robes.

The Coven: Tarakah distrusts the hags, who have no loyalty to the Malikah. The commissar knows how they came to be here (see the Adventure Background) and that they were a necessary evil for building the *planar tethers*. Her report includes details on void hags, their robes, their covens, and their stellar cauldrons, but nothing on the cauldron in the Crucible. (Tarakah realizes the hags have one but doesn't understand why it's special.) The commissar notes with some glee that Khaim entrusted her with keeping one of the void hags' robes, and the file identifies how Tarakah keeps the robe integrated into her armor. This file also notes Chief Zamun and Commander Dmyr have the other robes. Commissar Tarakah doesn't know why Khaim keeps the hags around, speculating they are still necessary for maintenance of the *planar tethers*. She hopes Chief Zamun will soon be able to do without them so the hags can be cast into the sun.

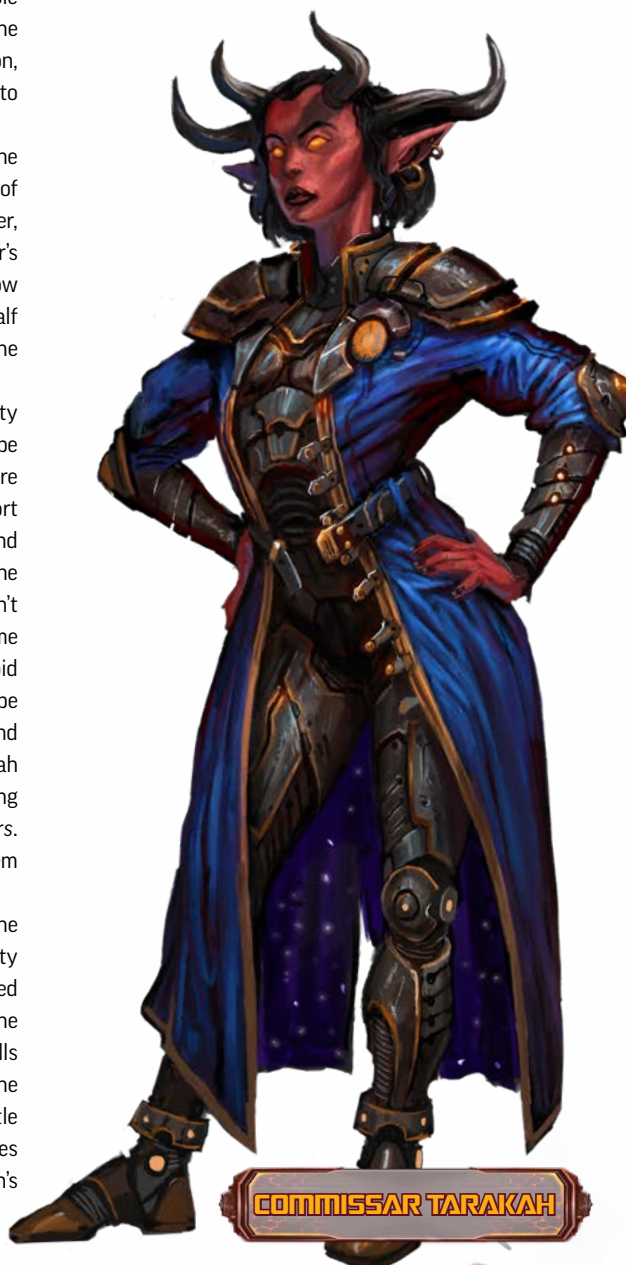
Others: The commissar has files on every member of the station garrison, noting that they were all chosen for loyalty and are pampered with lavish rewards to ensure their continued fidelity. Ifrit solarians are notable only for their devotion to the Malikah as a would-be sun deity. The salamanders she calls rash, bloodthirsty, and expendable. Tarakah considers the azers to be reliable and worthy of respect. She makes little note of the efreeti lieutenants, although a recent file notes research on Gahmnee, her deceased brother, and Tarakah's rightfully accusing him of disloyalty. It's clear Tarakah is keeping a close eye on Gahmnee.

Treasure: The wardrobe contains clothing and a few personal effects, plus a necklace of four glowing jewels—a set of *mk 3 plasma beads* (Armory 115). Mounted on the wall is an elite shirren-eye rifle with a *revealing scope* (Armory 61).

12. COMMANDER'S QUARTERS

The door to this area is locked.

The spoils of a long military career adorn this spacious bedchamber. A spear is mounted on one wall, above a case containing an array of medals and awards, some of which appear to be on fire. A twelve-foot-high wardrobe stands half-open, revealing a dress uniform and other clothing, near a large bed dripping with red silk, golden embroidery, and



COMMISSAR TARAKAH

VOID HAG ROBES

A void hag's robes can be worn as a hybrid item.

VOID HAG ROBE

LEVEL 11

HYBRID ITEM (WORN) PRICE 25,000 BULK 1

You can wear a void hag's robes as white carbon skin armor, or the robes can be worn as a cloak or tabard, offering no armor protection. In either case, you can treat the robe as a worn magic item. If you do so, you can use the void hag's stardust robes special ability (*Alien Archive* 120). Once you use a given void hag robe, you can't use another void hag robe for 24 hours. However, you can expend 1 Resolve Point to use the robe's powers again during the same day, up to a maximum of three times per day.

The robes aboard the Crucible are cursed. If you use the robes as a worn magic item, you are affected as if you are inside a *planar barrier*. You can still travel to another plane in a larger vehicle, such as a starship entering the Drift, but you can't travel the planes bodily. The hags on the Crucible placed this curse knowing it would preclude the bearers of their robes from using spells such as *plane shift* to easily escape the PCs, whose attack the hags foresaw in visions.

copious pillows. Layers of thick, brightly colored carpets in ornate patterns cover the floor, and a transparent section of the ceiling gives a view of the interior of the sun. A desk against one wall supports a bookshelf full of tomes of various sizes and bindings, and a holographic globe depicts Mataras, with glowing dots indicating the Burning Archipelago and Far Station, as well as the Crucible. A door stands in the northwestern corner of the room.

The northwestern door leads to a restroom.

In the wardrobe are clothing and personal effects. The books are military biographies of famous leaders from many species, before and since the Gap, and histories of military campaigns. Although many are written in Ignan, some are in Common, Vesk, Azlanti, Terran, and other languages. The medals denote various campaigns and battles, including victories against shaitans, ifrits, azers, and salamanders.

Treasure: Mounted on the wall is an *advanced bane devastating cryopike* Commander Dmyr won—as an etched plaque commemorates—in a campaign against salamanders in which he slew their leader, Istaxia. Formerly owned by Istaxia, the spear has the name “Douser” carved on the haft. The *bane* fusion works against outsiders that have the fire subtype.

The medals and decorations are made of valuable materials and are worth a total of 5,000 credits, though the PCs could potentially get more from a collector.

The commander also has an ornate, bejeweled copy of the illustrated efreeti tome entitled *Burning Ascendance of the Malikah*. Part holy text and part military history, this book tells the story of the Malikah, her conquest of an empire on the Plane of Fire, and her frustration at her inability to ascend to true divinity—a glory that should be her birthright. Within the back cover is a folded, stylized map of the Sovereignty of the Crimson Sun, prominently depicting a mountain named Sakalayo Peak and in a style like that of the book, signed by someone named Var. This book is easily worth 2,000 credits, or more to a collector of such tomes.

13. PORTAL CHAMBER

The door to this area is locked.

Near the eastern wall of this chamber looms a massive archway of silvery metal with five implanted crystals. The smell of baked stone hangs in the air.

Someone who succeeds at a DC 24 Engineering or Mysticism check can tell the archway is a planar portal. Its design is like that of the portal debris found in Noma's Core (see *Starfinder Adventure Path #15: Sun Divers*) but has been modified with Ignan runes. Those who discern the arch's function and can read the Ignan can deduce that the destination is the Plane of Fire.

Computers in areas **10** and **25** can activate or deactivate the portal, but it can be disabled here, requiring a successful DC 31 Mysticism check to mar the runes and remove the 5 crystals. Doing so takes 10 minutes. If the PCs don't decide on their own to disable it, the hags might recommend it.

If activated, the portal produces an opaque sheet of flame that deals damage as a *wall of fire*. Its destination is in Sunset Base (an efreeti military base beyond the scope of this adventure) in a room like this one. Opening the portal has no immediate ramifications, but leaving it open could cause additional enemies to enter the Crucible, and have a particular impact on **Event 5**. Whether that happens and who comes through is up to you.

Treasure: The five highly charged magic crystals can, if removed from the portal, be used as *teleportation pucks* (*Armory* 117).

Story Award: If the PCs disable the portal, award them 12,800 XP.

14. GUARD LOUNGE (CR 11+)

A large circular table surrounded by padded chairs stands in the center of this room. A bar housing many bottles and glasses lines one wall, with storage cabinets behind it. Couches cordon another area with a low table. In a niche stands a statue of black obsidian veined with red, depicting an imperious horned woman in fine robes. Posters on the wall show heroic efreet marching off to war, commanding

impressive capital ships, or working at a forge. Doors lead out of the room in every direction, with double blast doors located to the east and west.

This is a recreation room for the Crucible Guard rank and file. A mk 4 grenade scrambler (Armory 103) protects the area, emitting a wireless signal that interferes with grenade detonation sequences. Grenades of level 8–12 that hit an intersection within this area have a 50% chance to miss and instead land 1d6 squares away. Grenades of level 7 or lower automatically miss and land 1d6 squares away from their intended target.

The single door in the southeast corner of the room leads to a restroom.

Creatures: Crucible guards—one salamander, one azer, and one ifrit—are currently relaxing here, swapping tales and gibes and boasting while playing a holographic strategy game. The salamander harangues the others for serving the efreet, while the azer expounds on the value of labor and purpose. The ifrit agrees with the azer but places value on spiritual attainment and the grace of the Malikah. These guards attack as soon as they spot the PCs, using tactics typical of Crucible Guards. The guards might attempt to use the medical supplies (see Treasure), especially the *spell ampoules*, to make themselves resistant to any cold attacks PCs might use against them.

Two salamander cadets (it should be obvious to the PCs these are adolescent creatures) listen in and serve the guards refreshments. Since they don't stand and fight, they aren't factored into the encounter's CR. If the guards here joined a fight in area 2, these cadets are alone, waiting for the guards to return. A PC can stop one cadet from fleeing by succeeding at a DC 18 Intimidate check. It takes an ability that allows Intimidate to be used on a group, such as an envoy's menacing gaze, to halt both cadets at once.

AZER CRUCIBLE GUARD CR 8

XP 4,800

HP 115 (see page 13)

IFRIT CRUCIBLE GUARD CR 8

XP 4,800

HP 125 (see page 13)

SALAMANDER CRUCIBLE GUARD CR 8

XP 4,800

HP 125 (see page 14)

SALAMANDER CADETS (2) CR 3

XP 600 each

Variant salamanders (*Starfinder Adventure Path* #14: *Soldiers of Brass* 60)

NE Small outsider (extraplanar, fire)

Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8

DEFENSE HP 40 EACH
EAC 14; KAC 16

Fort +7; Ref +5; Will +2

Immunities fire

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee tail slap +12 (1d6+5 B & F; critical burn 1d4)

Offensive Abilities elemental fire

TACTICS

During Combat The cadets avoid battle with the PCs, using total defense or withdraw actions.

Morale The cadets flee, but scatter to alert other guards in the barracks in areas 16, 18, and 19.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Engineering +13, Intimidate +8, Stealth +8

Languages Ignan

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Elemental Fire (Su) See page 13.



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SALAMANDER CADET

Treasure: The grenade scrambler is attached to the center of the table—removing it is a trivial task, but it takes 1 minute. A PC who succeeds at a DC 27 Engineering check can remove the device as a full action that provokes attacks of opportunity. Set up on the table is an Imperial Conquest strategy game (Armory 108). Like the one in area 8, the obsidian statue of the Malikah is worth 1,500 credits. Refreshments are also like those in area 8. This bar has a mk 3 culinary synthesizer (Armory 129), too, but a cache of only 1,000 UPBs. In the bar's storage area is an emergency advanced medkit that contains a cache of consumables, including four *mk 3 serums of healing*, three nanite hypopens (one green and two white; Armory 106), and four *spell ampoules of lesser resistant armor*.

Development: A battle or loud noise here attracts the attention of the azer in area 19 and the other salamander cadets in area 15. The azer joins the battle, yelling for the cadets both here and in their barracks to “warn the others.” Even without such orders, the cadets attempt to slink through the narrow bathroom south of their room and connected to area 16. There, they wake the sleeping ifrit guard, then the salamander in area 18 and Sergeant Pludd in 17, each of whom immediately joins the battle. If the cadets succeed in warning everyone, they then return to their quarters and hide as this area becomes a massive brawl and a CR 14 encounter.

Story Award: The PCs gain XP for the cadets only by cowing them into inaction. Murdering these insignificant enemies gets them no XP.

15. CADET QUARTERS (CR 5)

Four nests of cushions lie haphazardly around the room among scattered plastic bins, buckets, and bags.

This area houses salamander cadets visiting the Crucible for military experience. That experience largely entails serving the other guards and avoiding the ire of other salamanders.

Creatures: Two cadets are here, cleaning gear for other guards or fearfully awaiting the conclusion of any battle in area 14. They are loyal to their superiors, but they know they must be outmatched, and so they attempt to intimidate the PCs into leaving—an undeniably brave effort. If attacked, the cadets flee and try to warn others in the barracks, as described in area 14.

SALAMANDER CADETS (2) CR 3

XP 800 each

HP 40 each (see page 25)

Treasure: Among the materials here, which comprise two complete armorcrafter kits and a weaponsmithing kits, is a basic strategy game (Armory 108).

Story Award: As in area 14, the PCs gain XP for the cadets only for intimidating them or questioning them successfully, rather than killing them.

16. IFRIT BARRACKS (CR 10)

Six beds are arranged around the outside wall, each with a dark, brass-trimmed trunk underneath. A trivid projector beams a view of interstellar space onto the ceiling. A shrine set in the center of the room displays a statue of black obsidian veined with gold, depicting an imperious horned woman in fine robes. Two objects float around her—a large crystal and a similarly sized lump of shiny black rock.

This barracks for the station's ifrits is also a shrine to the Malikah and her (would-be) solar aspect. A small closet to the east of the entrance contains only cleaning supplies and tools.

Creature: One ifrit Crucible Guard is asleep here when the PCs arrive in area 14.

IFRIT CRUCIBLE GUARD CR 8

XP 4,800

HP 125 (see page 13)

Treasure: The crystal is a diamond is worth 10,000 credits, while the shiny black stone is jet worth 500 credits. Anyone trained in Physical Science can identify these gems without a check. Like other statues of the Malikah, the one here is worth 1,500 credits.

17. GUARD SERGEANT'S QUARTERS (CR 10)

The ceiling in this room is transparent, revealing the sun's interior. The central spire of the Crucible is sometimes visible through the solar plasma, as is the tether of energy it sends to the Far Portal. The floor is a cluttered mess, the ornate carpets mostly hidden by a jumble of enormous pillows, various personal effects, pieces of shipping containers, and a low desk.

This room is the private quarters of the Guard commander.

Creatures: Sergeant Pludd, an old and surly military salamander and commander of the Crucible's Guard, lives here. At the sight of intruders, he attacks.

SERGEANT PLUDD CR 10

XP 9,600

Male variant salamander (*Starfinder Adventure Path* #14:

Soldiers of Brass 60)

NE Medium outsider (extraplanar, fire)

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

DEFENSE HP 165

EAC 23; **KAC** 25

Fort +14; **Ref** +12; **Will** +9

DR 15/magic; **Immunities** fire

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE
Speed 20 ft.

Melee *devastating harmonic interference blade* +23 (3d10+15 So; critical burn 2d4 and wound) or tail slap +23 (2d10+15 B & F plus grab; critical burn 2d4)

Offensive Abilities elemental fire

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with tail slap)

Noble Salamander Spell-like Abilities (CL 10th)

1/day—*summon creature* (4th level, Large fire elemental only), *wall of fire*

3/day—*dispel magic*, *explosive blast* (DC 17)

At will—*overheat* (DC 15)

STATISTICS

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

Skills Athletics +19, Engineering +24, Intimidate +19

Languages Common, Ignan

Gear d-suit III (mk 2 *fiery runeplates*^{AR}), *devastating harmonic interference blade*^{AR} with 3 high capacity batteries (40 charges each), datapad

TACTICS

Before Combat If forewarned, Pludd summons a fire elemental. If he does so, the elemental joins him in melee combat and helps him flank opponents.

During Combat Pludd uses *wall of fire* to separate himself from his enemies, then uses *explosive blast* on groups of foes. If his enemies close with him, he activates his *fiery runeplates* to surround himself with an aura of flame, exploiting his reach to attack foes who think themselves safe, constricting them in his coils.

Morale If reduced to 50 or fewer Hit Points, Pludd flees to area 14, mustering other guards along the way. If he finds no aid, he bolts to other areas to find reinforcements. If unable to flee, he cowers and begs for his life, his only condition that his surrender not be revealed.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Elemental Fire (Su) See page 13.

Treasure: The staff-like weapon Pludd wields forms its blade from coherent sound. It has a superficial resemblance to the “Douser” cryopike in area 12, which is also the weapon of a salamander noble. Pludd’s weapon has a name engraved on it, too. This name is “Cauterizer,” because it burns the wounds it deals.

Development: Pludd’s datapad (Computers DC 17 to unlock) contains duty rosters, notes, and a few games. Like the roster in the command centers, this duty roster allows the PCs to learn where specific NPCs currently are on the Crucible. The notes indicate that Pludd requested frontline duty for the assault on the Burning Archipelago, evening ordering shipping

containers for his belongings. A message shows his request was denied. Evidence in the room suggests he “unpacked” by destroying the containers and leaving most of his belongings where they lay afterward.



SERGEANT PLUDD

18. SALAMANDER BARRACKS (CR 8)

Six roundish nests of pillows, each about 5 feet across, are irregularly spaced throughout this chamber, each with a chest of dark composite and brass between it and the wall. Weapon racks are set into the walls above the chests, along with a large viewport that reveals the sun. This room shows obvious signs of combat, from dented racks and marred walls to ripped pillows and scratched trunks.

This room’s weapon racks are used to hold pikes and scatterguns, although most are empty (see Creatures) at this time. The

closet to the east contains tools the salamanders use to tinker with their gear—see the Treasure section.

Salamanders are prone to violence, and brawls are common here, hence the damage to the room.

Creature: One salamander rests here currently. She attacks intruders, grabbing her weapons from their rack.

SALAMANDER CRUCIBLE GUARD

CR 8

XP 4,800

HP 125 (see page 14)

Treasure: Each chest here contains 64 scattergun shells. The tools in the closet are the equivalent of five tool kits, including one armorcrafter kit and one weaponsmithing kit. Bins here also contain 10,000 UPBs, most still in sealed containers of 1,000 UPBs each.

19. AZER BARRACKS (CR 8)

Six beds line the walls, each with a dark, brass-trimmed trunk underneath. In the room’s center is a workbench with drawers, as well as an attached rack in the middle on which tools are neatly stored. A large skylight looks out onto solar fire just above this workspace.

Creature: One azer lounges in this room, off duty and reading on his personal comm unit.

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AZER CRUCIBLE GUARD

CR 8

XP 4,800

HP 115 (see page 13)

Treasure: On the workbench is a gauntlet, which is a set of advanced shell knuckles (*Armory* 8). This weapon looks well worn but recently repaired. The tools here amount to two tool kits, although it's clear another kit's worth of tools has been removed. The workspace also has a bin of 3,000 UPBs.

20. ROBOTICS PASSAGE

The ceiling of this long, wide hallway has a transparent strip that allows in sunlight. The hall is of dark metal and composite material, and blast doors of the same substance close off the far end to the southeast. Closer to the northwestern end are two narrower adjoining passages, one leading north and another west.

This hall leads to area 24 (page 30), and the southeastern blast door is labeled "Robotics" in Ignan. As the PCs move southeast, the hum of machinery and other industrial sounds grow louder, this din clearly coming from beyond the blast doors.

21. MEDICAL BAY

The center of this room is open space, the floor covered with thick mats, but medical equipment and a few beds are arranged along the walls, along with a desk with a computer terminal and several chairs and stools.

This medical bay is as much for animals as people, as anyone trained in Medicine or Life Science can tell. It provides all the benefits of a medical lab (*Core Rulebook* 220).

The computer is tier 5 (DC 33 to hack) and equipped with a data module that includes records of patients, as well as animals that have come through the Crucible. Most of the latter are vahdus, but the log shows a few trained tashtar (Starfinder Alien Archive 2 124). Records indicate many more beasts were here before the departure for the Burning Archipelago. This computer can be used to control the force fields in area 22.

Development: Any loud noises here are likely to draw the attention of the creatures in area 22.

Treasure: Supply cabinets among the medical equipment contain 1d4+3 doses each of tier 3 analgesics, antiemetics (*Armory* 132), antitoxins, coagulants (*Armory* 132), and sedatives.

They also hold six diagnostic lozenges (*Armory* 101), five mk 3 serums of healing, four nanite hypopens (one green, three white; *Armory* 106), and a needler pistol.

22. TRAINING AREA (CR 12)

This enormous chamber is largely open but includes cabinets set in the walls, as well as a stool. Pillars with control panels section off the northwestern and northeastern corners, the eastern one isolated by force fields that span the space from the pillar to the walls and ceiling. To the south is a sunken area with steps leading into it. Part of that area is open, padded space, while another portion contains exercise equipment.

Creatures: Sergeant Demjit San is here, training a vahdu with the help of another ifrit. A second vahdu rests in the force-enclosed area to the east. Sergeant San doesn't immediately attack the PCs unless forced to defend herself.



SERGEANT DEMJIT SAN

CR 10

9,600 XP

Female ifrit operative (*Starfinder Adventure Path* #13: *Fire Starters* 60)

LN Medium outsider (native)

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +19

DEFENSE

HP 150

EAC 23; **KAC** 24

Fort +10; **Ref** +12; **Will** +14

Defensive Abilities evasion, uncanny agility; **Resistances** fire 5

OFFENSE

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

Melee heavy flaming sap +21 (2d8+12 B) or advanced retractable spike +21 (3d4+10 P)

Ranged aurora arc pistol +21 (3d6+6 E)

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

Ifrit Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)

2/day—overheat (DC 17)

TACTICS

During Combat Sergeant San has a variety of nonlethal options which she relies on when training beasts, including her *scrambler gloves* (+21 melee; DC 20), and prefers to use these against enemies as well. However, she can activate the *flaming* capability of her sap

to make it lethal and turn half of the damage to fire damage, or switch her arc pistol to lethal from stun. She's curious about the intruders and tries to talk to them even while fighting (see Development). If any PC moves into the western area that could be enclosed with a force field, San or her subordinate activate the field to isolate that PC.

Morale Sergeant San fights bravely until reduced to fewer than 50 Hit Points. She then makes a fighting retreat toward area **14**, unless doing so requires her to abandon her beasts and ifrit subordinate. Sergeant San is willing to negotiate a surrender to ensure the safety of her companions, especially if she can persuade the PCs to allow her to treat the injured.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Acrobatics +25, Athletics +20, Culture +20, Life Science +20, Medicine +25, Survival +25

Languages Aquan, Auran, Common, Ignan, Terran

Other Abilities fire affinity, operative exploits (ever vigilant, versatile movement), specialization (explorer)

Gear d-suit III (advanced retractable spike [boot]), aurora arc pistol, *heavy flaming sap*, *ring of sustenance*, *mk 2 scrambler gloves*^{AR}, *mk 3 serum of healing*, personal comm unit

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fire Affinity (Su) See page 13.

VAHDUS (2)

CR 8

XP 4,800

HP 125 (see page 14)

TACTICS

During Combat The vahdus attack by pouncing, following Sergeant San's orders.

Morale The vahdus fight until ordered to cease.

IFRIT CRUCIBLE GUARD

CR 8

XP 4,800

HP 125 (see page 13)

TACTICS

During Combat The ifrit releases the second vahdu from its enclosure using the control panel (a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity), then works with allies to flank the PCs.

Morale Every non-salamander Crucible Guard greatly respects Sergeant San for her skill and even temper. This ifrit won't abandon her, and is willing to die to cover her retreat (which she won't allow).

Hazard: The control panels on the pillars activate and deactivate the force fields, which span the space shown on the map from floor to ceiling. These fields are essentially *walls of force*, although they cannot be dispelled. The control panels are a weak point (AC 10, hardness 8, 22 HP). If one is

destroyed, the force field near it goes down until the panel is repaired or replaced.

Development: Sergeant San is forthright about asking the PCs why they're here, both during combat and if she surrenders. If the PCs allow Sergeant San to surrender, she keeps any agreement she makes with them unless they break it first. If given an idea what the PCs are up to, she recommends that the PCs avoid the barracks—more to protect her people than to save the PCs trouble.

23. FORGE (CR 12)

This irregularly shaped chamber has grayish metal walls that join a transparent dome about 20 feet up, revealing the sun's plasma and arcing to over 40 feet high. The spire that runs up from the Crucible is intermittently visible through the bright, swirling material, as is the energy it sends toward the Far Portal. In the room's center is a massive furnace with three angled faces, each decorated with fiery runes. Out of gaps in this machine come gouts of flame, intense heat, and a roar that rises and falls like a creature's breathing. An engineering workstation stands in front of each face of the furnace. Weapons of all kinds—polearms and axes, pistols and rifles—are racked along the wall behind various storage bins filled with raw materials.

Khaim's engineers manufacture military armaments here. The activity and machinery in this area is quite loud, imposing a –2 penalty to hearing-based Perception checks.

Creatures: Chief Engineer Zamun is here. He's working on engineering replacement parts for the *planar tethers*—parts that might allow the Crucible to do without the hags. Taking on general weapon-making tasks under his command are a salamander and an azer.

CHIEF ZAMUN

CR 10

XP 9,600

Azer technomancer (*Starfinder Adventure Path #13: Fire Starters* 55)

LN Medium outsider (extraplanar, fire)

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

DEFENSE

HP 140 RP 5

EAC 22; **KAC** 23

Fort +12; **Ref** +8; **Will** +13

Immunities fire; **Resistances** cold 10; **SR** 21

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee power battleglove +19 (2d8+13 B; critical burn 2d4)

Ranged *dispelling ghost killer anharmonic dirge pistol* +18 (3d4+10 So; critical sicken or dispel magic [CL 10th])

Offensive Abilities elemental fire

Technomancer Spells Known (CL 10th; melee +19)

4th (3/day)—*dimension door*, *rewire flesh* (DC 22)

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3rd (6/day)—*arcing surge* (DC 21), *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *haste*, *slow* (DC 21)

2nd (at will)—*inject nanobots* (DC 20), *invisibility*

TACTICS

During Combat Chief Zamun wants battle to end as soon as possible and casts *arcing surge* and *slow* on groups of enemies. When enemy mystics and technomancers try to control the battlefield or enhance their allies with magic, he counters with magic negation.

Morale If reduced to 35 Hit Points or fewer, Zamun casts *dimension door* to slip away, unaware of his curse. If none of his ruses work, he offers his knowledge of the *planar tethers* in exchange for mercy.

STATISTICS

Str +3; **Dex** +2; **Con** +5; **Int** +7; **Wis** +2; **Cha** +0

Skills Computers +24, Engineering +24, Mysticism +19

Languages Aklo, Common, Ignan, Infernal, Terran

Other Abilities cache capacitor 1 (*unseen servant*), magic hacks (magic negation, tech countermeasures), spell cache (datapad)

Gear d-suit III (mk 2 thermal capacitor, *Mother Maelstrom's robes*), power battleglove with 1 battery (20 charges), *dispelling ghost killer anharmonic dirge pistol*^{AR} with 2 batteries (20 charges each), datapad

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Elemental Fire (Su) See page 13.

Mother Maelstrom's Robes (Su) Mother Maelstrom's robes are integrated into Zamun's armor like a cloak, functioning as a worn hybrid item. These robes display a vast, multi-hued cosmic storm that swallows starships. See the Void Hag Robes sidebar (page 24).

AZER CRUCIBLE GUARD

CR 8

XP 4,800

HP 115 (see page 13)

SALAMANDER CRUCIBLE GUARD

CR 8

XP 4,800

HP 125 (see page 14)

Treasure: Most of the weapons here have an item level of 5 or lower and as such are not considered to be treasure. However, 50,000 UPBs intended for making more weapons rest in the storage bins.

In addition, Chief Zamun's datapad is a hardened tier 3 miniaturized computer with a security II module (Computers DC 28 to hack). It has a 24-hour lockout countermeasure that initiates after three failed access attempts. The device is worth 4,000 credits. The data on the pad delineates the function of the *planar tethers*, how and where they're activated and deactivated, how they keep the Far Portal locked on new locations (mentioning the two siccacite control rods), and detailed analyses of them. Zamun's pad also contains a duty roster, which can allow the PCs to learn where personnel are

on the Crucible. Finally, this datapad is a subsystem of the command computers (areas **10** and **25**), and having access to it grants a +4 circumstance bonus to hack computers on the Crucible except Commissar Tarakah's in area **11**.

Development: Someone who takes the time to analyze the runes on the forge and succeeds at a DC 26 Mysticism check can ascertain that an elder fire elemental is trapped within the forge. It can leave only if the forge is suitably damaged or the magical containment is broken. The forge is a colossal object made of an adamantium-siccacite alloy with hardness 30 and immunity to electricity, fire, and cold damage. It takes 50 damage to one side of the forge to mar the runes enough to break the containment, freeing the elemental. *Dispel magic* can suppress the runes for 1 hour, provided the dispeller succeeds at a DC 27 caster level check.

If freed, the elder elemental takes its first turn breaking out of and ruining the forge. It then rampages, attacking any creature it runs across. The elemental attacks the nearest creature. It prefers targets that aren't immune to fire damage.

ELDER FIRE ELEMENTAL

CR 11

XP 12,800

N Huge outsider (elemental, extraplanar, fire)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +20

DEFENSE

HP 145

EAC 24; **KAC** 26

Fort +15; **Ref** +13; **Will** +10

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

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee slam +24 (4d6+19 B & F, critical burn 3d4)

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

STATISTICS

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

Skills Acrobatics +20, Athletics +20

Feats Mobility

Countdown: Add 1 to the countdown if the PCs cause the forge to be destroyed.

24. ROBOTICS (CR 11+)

The noise of industrial machinery echoes off this enormous chamber's walls, which transition into a clear dome twenty feet up, letting in the glow of solar plasma. A wide staircase leads up to a brass platform with a control console. The platform looks down on a network of four intersecting assembly lines, each leading out of a boxlike automated minifactory.

Khaim's engineers create battle robots here. The dome arcs to 45 feet high. Noise in this area imposes a -2 penalty on hearing-based Perception checks.

23. FORGE



1 SQUARE = 10 FEET

24. ROBOTICS



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The control console atop the brass platform is used to monitor, operate, and halt the robot assembly process. It has a tier 5 computer (DC 33 to hack) with a single secure data module that contains the design of the robots, the minifactories, and the assembly process, all designed by Chief Zamun and other engineers that work here. The computer is isolated from the larger Crucible network.

Creatures: An azer and salamander are debugging the robot assembly process. Their latest test, a Crucible battle robot, stands at the end of the assembly line under the stairs, between the “head” and “torso” facilities. The salamander is with the robot, while the azer is at the control console on the platform. All these creatures are distracted unless the Crucible is on alert, and thus take a –2 penalty to all Perception checks to notice the PCs (for a total of –4 to hear the PCs).

The salamander has the robot in standby mode. If he notices the PCs, his first inclination is to reactivate the robot he’s working on. Doing so requires a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity, after which the robot rolls initiative, failing to act during the current round if that initiative count has already passed.

When the azer becomes aware of intruders, she re-activates the robot assembly line. Doing so requires her to take a full action that provokes attacks of opportunity. If she succeeds, she activates the hazard.

AZER CRUCIBLE GUARD **CR 8**

XP 4,800

HP 115 (see page 13)

SALAMANDER CRUCIBLE GUARD **CR 8**

XP 4,800

HP 125 (see page 14)

CRUCIBLE BATTLE ROBOT **CR 8**

XP 4,800

HP 125 (see page 15)

Hazard: The automated assembly line produces additional robots that come out ready to join the battle against the PCs. Creating a new robot in this manner takes 3 rounds—at the start of the fourth round the robot activates and the assembly line begins construction of a new one, such that a new robot enters combat at the start of every fourth round thereafter. The line—recently used to make robots for the assault on the Burning Archipelago—progresses counterclockwise (head to torso to legs to arms) and has enough supplies to make three additional robots. When supplies run out, the assembly line stops.

There are three ways to deactivate the assembly line. A PC can hack the control console computer—once they’ve gained access, the PC can shut the system down as a full action that provokes opportunity attacks. Alternatively, PCs can attempt to shut down parts of the manufactory. Shutting down one minifactory requires 2d4 rounds (the PC should be able to estimate this time factor before the attempt) and a successful DC 25 Engineering check. However, the PC reduces the time by 1 round for every increment of 5 by which the check exceeds the DC. Shutting down even one minifactory halts the assembly line. Reactivating a

minifactory shut down in this way takes as much time as deactivating it. Finally, the PCs can also damage a minifactory, which has AC 5 and hardness 20, and can take 60 damage before entering a standby safety mode and 180 damage before being destroyed. A minifactory in standby mode reactivates only if someone at the control console overrides that mode—a standard action that provokes opportunity attacks.

Development: If the PCs gain control of the manufactory, they can create the remaining robots. However, anyone trained in Engineering or Computers understands that the robots' protocols must be reprogrammed. If they're not, the robots are certain to emerge from the assembly process hostile to the PCs. Changing the protocols to favor the PCs rather than the personnel of the Crucible requires root access to the computer here, and gaining such access requires a successful DC 53 Computers check (or somehow gaining root access from Chief Zamun, Commissar Tarakah, or Commander Dmyr). If the PCs manufacture robots after gaining such access, the robots obey the PCs.

Treasure: Storage bins within the minifactories contain 25,000 UPBs each. If the PCs desire, they can use 75,000 of these UPBs to manufacture another robot. It takes 2 hours for the minifactories to produce the intricate parts. Then, the robot can be assembled in 3 rounds. This robot is also hostile unless the PCs gained root access to the computer to change the robots' protocols.

Story Award: If the PCs shut down the manufactory, they receive 4,800 XP for each robot they did not need to fight, up to 14,400 XP.

Countdown: Add 1 to the countdown if the PCs destroy the robotics factory.

25. HIGH TETHER COMMAND (CR 13)

This round room hums, the air rippling with power and occasional flares of green light and motes of darkness. To the northwest are a control console and a view screen with varied images. That screen is set in a transparent wall looking out into the solar plasma. Green energy surrounded by foamlike black bubbles beams from this structure toward the Far Portal, which hovers in the stellar fires. To the southeast, a massive bank of machinery stands against a dark, opaque wall. Carved into the floor is a stylized six-pointed star filled

with red enamel. Doors exit the chamber to the northeast and southwest.

This domed room has a 30-foot-high ceiling.

The *planar tether* control station is a computer console that faces a hemispherical view screen and the wall. This view screen displays recent events (within 3 hours) at the Burning Archipelago, streamed from General Khaim's personal flagship, an ornate efreeti destroyer. Depending on the current countdown, the efreeti fleet might be embroiled in a thick battle, routing an improvised fleet of Burning Archipelago defenders, or bombing a bubble city while preparing troops for a ground invasion.

The computer is a tier 6 machine with a security 1 upgrade (DC 38 to hack), two secure data modules, and a silent alarm that sends a notification to Commander Dmyr and Chief Zamun each time someone fails to access the system. On the machinery to the southeast are three standing

workstations connected to this computer. This computer has access to every other computer on the Crucible, like the computer in area **10**, but also has connections to the computer in area **26**, allowing that computer to be hacked from workstations attached to this computer.

The first data module here has a copy of the records stored in area **10**, such as duty rosters, along with a log of everything that has occurred since those older records, including the planning and building of the *planar tethers*. The second module is behind a firewall (Computers DC 40 to hack) and contains complete schematics of the entire Crucible, including the elevator (area **3**), its traps, and areas **25–31**, including the *planar tethers*.

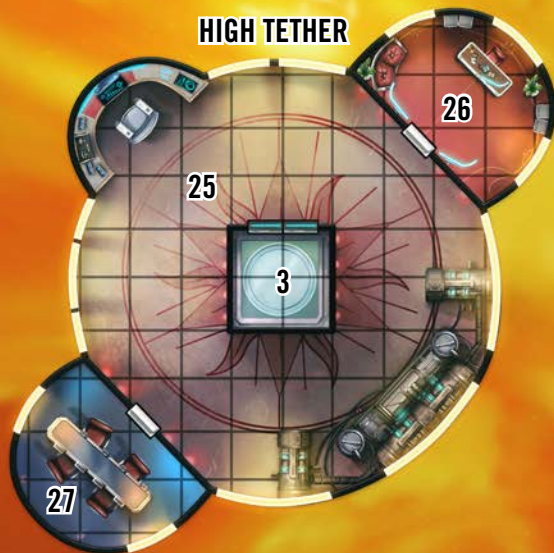
From these files, the PCs can learn more details of the siccattite control rods used to operate the *planar tethers*. One rod must be inserted into a command module here and another in the machinery in the lower tether (area **28**)—both control rods must be inserted before any changes can be made regarding the Far Portal. A PC who gains access to the information on the *planar tethers* knows Commander Dmyr has one rod and General Khaim has the other. In addition, inserting one rod in area **28** sends an alert to the holder of the other rod with no range limit.

Creatures: Commander Dmyr watches data and incoming video from the battle at the Burning Archipelago, trying to be optimistic about it. This battle's outcome determines his future, but he can do nothing to affect it from here. An efreeti

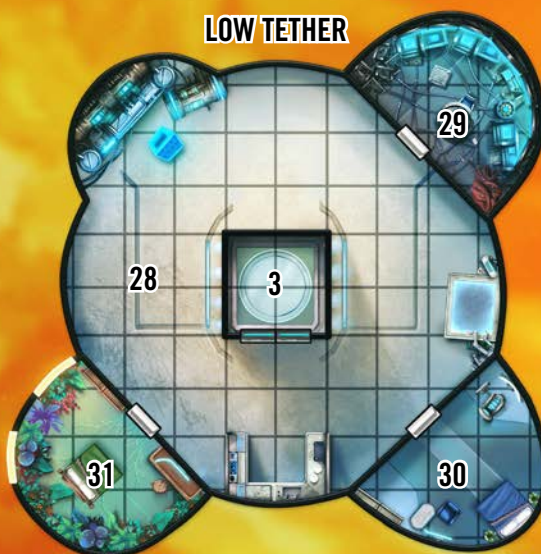


PLANAR TETHERS

HIGH TETHER



LOW TETHER



1 SQUARE = 10 FEET

ASSAULT
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lieutenant named Zarra attends to the commander while engaging in other duties.

COMMANDER DMYR**CR 12****XP 19,200**

Male variant efreeti (*Starfinder Adventure Path #13: Fire Starters* 59)

LE Medium (normally Large) outsider (extraplanar, fire)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +19

DEFENSE**HP 185**

EAC 26; **KAC** 26

Fort +13; **Ref** +11; **Will** +15

Immunities fire; **Resistances** cold 10

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

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

Melee *devastating ultrathin curveblade* +24 (3d10+20 S; critical bleed 2d6 and burn 3d4) or *slam* +24 (2d12+20 B & F; critical burn 3d4)

Ranged *devastating hailstorm-class zero pistol* +21 (2d6+12 C; critical burn 3d4 and staggered) or *scorching ray* +21 (2d8+12 F; critical burn 3d4)

Offensive Abilities elemental fire

Efreeti Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th, ranged +21)

1/day—*greater invisibility*, *holographic image* (5th level, DC 22), *pyroclastic eddy* (as *cosmic eddy*, but the damage is B & F, DC 21)

3/day—*explosive blast* (DC 20), *invisibility*, *wall of fire*, *wish* (for non-genies only)

At will—*detect magic*, *energy ray* (fire only), *overheat*

(DC 18), *plane shift* (willing targets to the elemental planes, Astral Plane, or Material Plane only)

TACTICS

Before Combat If Dmyr hears the elevator chime, he activates his force field. If he goes on full alert—such as after receiving a security notification—he activates his force field, creates a *holographic image* that makes it appear like this area is empty, and he prepares to ambush intruders by using *invisibility* on himself.

During Combat Dmyr starts by activating his auto-injector, then using *greater invisibility* and flying aloft. (He takes a moment to activate his force field during his next turn.) He's wily enough to use *explosive blast* and *pyroclastic eddy* on groups, but relishes melee combat. He saves *wall of fire* to cut off enemy retreat.

Morale Commander Dmyr is a career military man who believes in his cause and leaders. He fights to the death.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Athletics +22, Bluff +27, Intimidate +27, Mysticism +22, Sense Motive +27

Languages Aklo, Aquan, Auran, Common, Ignan, Infernal, Terran; telepathy 100 ft.

Other Abilities change shape (humanoid)

Gear squad hardlight series (auto-injector [*spell ampoule of haste*], *Daughter Drift's Robes*, mk 2 thermal capacitor, white force field), *devastating hailstorm-class zero pistol* with 2 high-capacity batteries (40 charges each), *devastating ultrathin curveblade*, cold siccitate control rod, personal comm unit

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Daughter Drift's Robes (Su) Daughter Drift's robes are integrated into Dmyr's armor like a cloak, functioning as a worn hybrid item. These robes shimmer like the swirling colors of the Drift. See the Void Hag Robes sidebar (page 24). Dmyr is unaware the robes are cursed.

Elemental Fire (Su) See page 13, but this ability deals 3d4 fire damage instead of 2d4.

Scorching Ray (Su) As an attack, Dmyr can launch a ray of fire with a range increment of 30 feet and a maximum range of 90 feet.

EFREETI LIEUTENANT

CR 9

XP 6,400

HP 145 (see page 19)

TACTICS

Before Combat Lieutenant Zarra follows Dmyr's instructions, preparing to ambush intruders by using *invisibility* on herself. If she has enough time, she uses *wall of fire* to cover the elevator door.

During Combat The lieutenant uses the *elemental gem*. Dmyr always gives his aids to summon a Huge fire elemental, which remains for 12 rounds or until slain. This ally is mostly there as a distraction and to provide some battlefield control and flanking. Zarra flies and fires on her foes, using *explosive blast* if they group up.

Morale Zarra is unwilling to flee while Dmyr lives. If he falls and she has 45 or fewer Hit Points remaining, she makes for the elevator to escape. If she manages that, she rushes to area **14** for reinforcements.

STATISTICS

Gear mk 5 *elemental gem* (fire)

HUGE FIRE ELEMENTAL

CR 7

XP –

N Huge outsider (elemental, extraplanar, fire)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +20

DEFENSE

EAC 19; **KAC** 21

Fort +11; **Ref** +9; **Will** +6

DR 5/–; **Immunities** elemental immunities, fire

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee slam +18 (2d6+12 B & F, critical burn 2d4)

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

STATISTICS

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

Skills Acrobatics +14, Athletics +14

Feats Mobility

26. READY ROOM

This room is locked, opening only for Commander Dmyr's biometrics or at his verbal command from within the room.

This austere room contains a large glass-topped desk with a computer panel on it and a chair behind it. Along the walls are a couch and a few cabinets.

The cabinets here are empty.

Built into the desk is a workstation for the computer in area **25**. This station has a secure data module behind a firewall (Computers DC 38 to hack). This data module contains Dmyr's personal logs and his reports to General Khaim. Insight into what the commander knows and believes can be found in this data, but making sense of it all is a task that requires 1 hour and a successful DC 28 Computers check—at your discretion, any PC train in a Profession (or with another character ability) good for compiling or combing through information might be able to use such a capability instead of the Computers skill on this check.

27. BRIEFING ROOM

This austere room contains a meeting table and four chairs. The outer wall is transparent, allowing in the glow of coruscating plasma.

Built into the table is a workstation for the computer in area **25**. Screens in the table allow someone using the workstation to display information for those sitting in other positions around the table. The table also has a trivid display for projecting holograms those at the table can see and interact with.

28. LOW TETHER (CR 13)

This round room is cold and illuminated by blue light from panels in the walls. To the northwest is a bank of bizarre machinery. In front of that equipment, on the floor, sits a cubic device with strange runic patterns almost like circuitry. It pulses with green light, an occasional dark bubble emerging from an opening atop it. This green energy flows into the machinery, the dark bubbles breaking into tinier motes of foam before spreading out and disappearing into the machinery as well. To the south is an ornate and macabre area best described as a kitchen, and to the east is a huge metal table, like one might find in a morgue, with ornate medical gear around it and on the wall near it. Closed doors stand in the curved wall to the northeast, southeast, and southwest.

The room is cold enough to cause the exhalations of warm-blooded creatures to become mist, hovering near 40° F. In addition, the magical energy is so potent here that anyone trained in Mysticism or otherwise sensitive to magic feels it automatically.

A large operating table, surrounded by a bizarre but functional medical lab, stands in the east.

Creatures: Three void hags dwell here. They might await the PCs, especially if the elevator warns them or they've spoken to the PCs already. Otherwise, each is working here or in her own chamber.

Old Nanite appears to be the eldest, and she has a hunched back and shambling gait. She is shrewd, preferring to feign weakness and size up potential foes, striking when least expected. The other hags often defer to her wisdom and stratagems, and it is she who fomented the plan to work with the PCs when they were but visions. Mother Maelstrom is a tall, imperious void hag with a bellicose heart. Wanting to be feared most of all, she delights in direct action and visceral violence. Daughter Drift looks the youngest, and she uses token spell to animate her hair in flowing, grasping locks. She likes to "play" cruelly, especially with her victims.

These hags lack the pistols of their *Alien Archive* versions. Without their robes, they also lack access to their stardust robes special ability.

DAUGHTER DRIFT

CR 10

XP 9,600

Variant void hag (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 120)

HP 110

OFFENSE

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)

1/day—*hold monster* (DC 22), *cosmic eddy* (DC 22)

3/day—*irradiate* (DC 21), *psychokinetic strangulation* (DC 21)

At will—*inflict pain* (DC 20), *token spell*

TACTICS

During Combat Daughter Drift likes to toy with her prey, laughing as she uses *hold monster* to paralyze someone to carve on with her knife. She uses *psychokinetic strangulation* for a similar torturous effect. Drift uses *irradiate* or *cosmic eddy* only if she can do so without hurting her "sisters."

Morale Once reduced to 30 Hit Points or fewer, Daughter Drift attempts to flee and hide. If confronted again, she begs for her life, even resorting to offering her robes in exchange for being spared.

STATISTICS

Gear freebooter armor, ultrathin dagger

MOTHER MAELSTROM

CR 10

XP 9,600

Variant void hag (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 120)

HP 125

OFFENSE

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)

1/day—*confusion* (DC 22), *cosmic eddy* (DC 22)

3/day—*irradiate* (DC 21), *haste*

At will—*force blast* (DC 20), *token spell*

TACTICS

Before Combat If given the opportunity, Mother Maelstrom casts *haste* on herself and her "sisters."

During Combat Despite her serious demeanor, Mother Maelstrom likes to sow chaos among her foes, moving them as she desires. She opens with *confusion*, then uses *cosmic eddy* to control strong warriors or spellcasters. After that, she uses *force blast* repeatedly.

Morale When General Khaim captured Mother Maelstrom, he had to knock her out. Loudly proclaiming as much, she fiercely fights until slain, mocking her foes with her last breath.

STATISTICS

Gear freebooter armor, ultrathin dagger

OLD NANITE

CR 10

XP 9,600

Variant void hag (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 120)

HP 120

OFFENSE

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th, ranged +19)

1/day—*cosmic eddy* (DC 22), *enervation*

3/day—*irradiate* (DC 21), *ray of exhaustion* (DC 21)

At will—*caustic conversion*, *token spell*

TACTICS

During Combat Embodying forces of decay, Old Nanite weakens the strongest among her foes with *enervation* or *ray of exhaustion*, then hurls nanites (*caustic conversion*) to turn her enemies into goo. Her successes amuse her, as do her foes' failures, yet she's not as cruelly jovial as Daughter Drift.

Morale Old Nanite withdraws only if she is alone on the field and at fewer than 30 Hit Points. She makes a last stand if cornered.



THE HAGS

DIVINATION MIRROR

Mother Maelstrom's mirror is a magic item. This particular mirror is ornate and it weighs 10 bulk. A similar item could be made with modern materials at significantly less bulk.

DIVINATION MIRROR

LEVEL 8

MAGIC ITEM

PRICE 8,500

BULK 2

You can use a *divination mirror* to display the results of divination spells that provide you with information or images, allowing others to see or otherwise experience this information as you do in real time. You must be within 30 feet of the mirror to use its capabilities. You can transmit to the mirror anything sensed by a magical sensor you create, such as with *arcane eye* or *clairaudience/clairvoyance*. The mirror can transmit sound, so you can cause it to reproduce what you hear from spells such as *augury*, *commune with nature*, *contact other plane*, *detect thoughts*, and *divination*. The mirror can display the aura of someone you subject to *discern lies*, as well as impressions and images you receive from spells such as *retrocognition* and *vision*. You can allow the mirror to transmit telepathic messages you receive so others present can hear that content. Divination spells that only change the nature of information you send and receive—such as *comprehend languages*, *tongues*, and *true seeing*—can't be used through the mirror.

STATISTICS

Gear freebooter armor, ultrathin dagger

In addition to their personal capabilities, when the hags are within 30 feet of one another, they can cast the following spells by each taking a full action to do so, due to the heightened abilities of the *Fivefold Cauldron*. Their doing so in combat is unlikely.

Coven Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th)

At will—*call cosmos* (DC 24), *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *control gravity* (DC 25), *gravitational singularity* (DC 25, +25 attack bonus), *interplanetary teleport*, *retrocognition*, *snuff life* (DC 25), *telepathy*, and *vision*.

The *planar barrier* in the tether prevents the hags from using *interplanetary teleport*. However, the *Fivefold Cauldron* allows the coven to use *telepathy* on creatures they can sense using *clairaudience/clairvoyance* as if that spell's sensor were the source of the spell for *telepathy*'s 100-foot range limit. That's how they contacted the PCs in event 4.

Treasure: The hags keep their kitchen in the south. This includes a set of high-tech appliances, including a white

star plasma oven, blizzard-class refrigeration unit, HFD sonic blender, zero-edge food processor, and a mk 3 culinary synthesizer with a cache of 3,000 UPBs. Each device has mystic runes and circles inscribed upon it, and each gives off a sickly green, orange, or violet light that oscillates when the device is in use. Shelves of spices collected from throughout the Pact Worlds, the Veskarium, and beyond are mounted to the walls. Some of these "spices" are made from the remains of deadly or rare creatures, as is some of the meat preserved in the refrigeration unit. Portions of this flesh belong to fiery creatures like those found on the Crucible.

PCs can also find the *Fivefold Cauldron* here. The hags offer allied PCs who have reacquired the hags' robes the chance to use the cauldron, advocating its power as a curative if the PCs have such needs. Each PC can dip a hand or cup in the cauldron and imbibe the swirling, star-filled pseudo-liquid within. A PC who does so benefits as if the target of one of the following spells: *regenerate*, *remove affliction* (automatically effective), or *restoration* (can remove 1 permanent negative level). Alternatively, a PC can elect to regain 10 Resolve Points or 10 levels worth of spell slots, divided among and restoring slots the PC has expended. A PC can benefit from the *Fivefold Cauldron* only once in this way. Imbibing a second time subjects the drinker to a *snuff life* spell. The void hags also suffer the *snuff* spell as long as General Khaim is still alive. Any PC who imbibes from the *Fivefold Cauldron* while the hags live takes a –4 penalty to saving throws against the hag's abilities for 72 hours. (Alternatively, if you find it preferable, you can allow drinking from the cauldron to be the equivalent of an 8-hour rest for the drinker, though still with the same penalty to saving throws.) A PC who casts *detect magic*, concentrates for 1 minute, and succeeds at a DC 34 Mysticism check can guess the beneficial ramifications of drinking from the cauldron, though discerning the negative side effects requires succeeding by 5 or more. Using *detect magic* also clues the caster in to the fact that a lot of magic flows through the *planar tether*, and that the cauldron is a very potent magic item.

Development: The hags are willing to discuss the features of the area with allied PCs. The medical lab, for instance, they used to help General Khaim create a fearless and unquestioning "honor guard"—efreeti cybernetic golems. See **Event 4** for more on what the hags reveal.

If the PCs bring the robes to the hags, the grateful ladies retire to don their precious attire. However, if the PCs reveal Daughter Drift's duplicity and, as the other hags request, refuse to return her robes, Mother Maelstrom and Old Nanite cast their treacherous "little sister" from the coven. Daughter Drift protests but bides her time, later joining her sisters in their betrayal of the PCs (see page 39) in hopes of reclaiming her robes.

Story Award: If the PCs recover the robes for the hags, award them 12,800 XP. Groups that withhold Daughter Drift's robes gain an additional 6,400 XP, for a total of 19,200.

29. OLD NANITE'S ROOM

Aged computer terminals and storage drives are piled all about this room. Light from these terminals provides the only illumination. A metal-framed bed here has sleek, modern coverings, with ample signs of age and wear.

30. MOTHER MAELSTROM'S ROOM

This room is luxuriously appointed, with a comfortable four-poster bed, set of dresser drawers, and a full-length mirror framed in arcane symbols. Sitting in front of the mirror is a high-backed captain's chair.

Those who inspect the chair find it is marked with Stewards insignia on the headrest and the underside. If asked, Mother Maelstrom admits to "acquiring" it from a Stewards cruiser near Aballon long ago.

Treasure: A PC who examines the mirror and succeeds at a DC 25 Mysticism check recognizes that the arcane inscriptions make the mirror a *divination mirror* (see the sidebar). The hags use the device regularly, with Mother Maelstrom sitting in the chair and the other hags alongside her, craning to get a better look.

31. DAUGHTER DRIFT'S ROOM

A warm mist escapes from this room as the door opens. Hanging vines and flowering plants grow everywhere in this area, which is warmer and more humid than the rest of the hags' lair. A fancy bed stands in the middle of the room, covered in a brown beast's hide of fur and feathers. On the pillow is a poppet decorated with spikes of metal and bone. At the head of the bed is a small, silvery cylinder.

The cylinder is a common digital recorder and player. On it is a library of the sounds of all Daughter Drift's victims as they screamed in agony or pleaded for mercy. The poppet, which Daughter Drift calls Nell, makes appearances in these files. It is a minor magic item that can be commanded to walk or run, squeak, cringe, sob or scream, and otherwise act like a tiny, very frightened person.

Treasure: The hide on Daughter Drift's bed is that of an owlbear. Such a fine hide can fetch 2,000 credits, or more from a collector of such oddities if the PCs can find one.

EVENT 5: CONFRONTING KHAIM (CR 15)

When the PCs insert the cold siccitate control rod in the machinery in area **28**, doing so alerts General Khaim almost instantaneously on a telepathic level. He disengages from overseeing the assault on the Burning Archipelago, turning command over to a subordinate temporarily, and prepares for battle. He gathering his honor guards—two cybernetic golems

made from the flesh of his defeated efreeti noble enemies. Khaim arrives on the Crucible 10 minutes later, via a *plane shift* spell with its accuracy tied to the *planar tethers* and his control rod. When he arrives, he sets the station personnel on alert if it isn't already. He then goes to area **13**, opening the portal there to call for reinforcements, such as six additional Crucible Guards and an efreeti lieutenant. If he finds the portal disabled, he instead distributes any remaining Crucible troops throughout the station to cut off any intruder's escape and goes with his honor guard to confront any intruders he finds in the Crucible. General Khaim stops hunting only after he finds and eliminates the PCs.

GENERAL KHAIM

CR 13
XP 25,600

Male variant efreeti soldier (*Starfinder Adventure Path* #13: *Fire Starters* 59)

LE Large outsider (extraplanar, fire)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +23

DEFENSE **HP 225 RP 5**

EAC 27; **KAC** 28

Fort +12; **Ref** +14; **Will** +16; +2 vs. mind-affecting effects

Immunities fire; **Resistances** cold 10; **SR** 17

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

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

Melee *devastating grindblade* +25 (4d10+21 S; critical bleed 2d6 and burn 3d4)

Ranged *defiant vorpal medium machine gun* +23 (3d10+17 P; critical severe wound) or scorching ray +23 (2d10+13 F; critical burn 3d4)

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

Offensive Abilities duck and weave, elemental fire, elusive target, fighting styles (sharpshoot, hit-and-run), focus fire, gear boosts (heavy onslaught), nimble fusillade, opening volley, sniper's aim, soldier's onslaught

Efreeti Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th)

1/day—*greater invisibility*, *holographic image* (5th level, DC 22), *pyroclastic eddy* (as *cosmic eddy*, but the damage is B & F, DC 21)

3/day—*explosive blast* (DC 20), *invisibility*, *wall of fire*, *wish* (for non-genies only)

At will—*detect magic*, *energy ray* (fire only), *overheat* (DC 18), *plane shift* (willing targets to the elemental planes, Astral Plane, or Material Plane only)

TACTICS

Before Combat If he knows battle is coming soon, General Khaim can arrive for a confrontation having already cast *invisibility* (or *greater invisibility*) on himself.

During Combat Khaim opens with fire from his machine gun. He can move and make a full attack with his machine gun on the same round, spending Resolve Points if necessary to avoid attacks of opportunity, and he remains adjacent to one of his honor guard

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THE FIVEFOLD CAULDRON

The *Fivefold Cauldron* started out as a normal stellar cauldron such as any coven of void hags might have. Using the hags as proxies, the Malikah imparted a *wish* to it, as did General Khaim. Doing so allowed the device to provide power for and maintain the *planar tethers*. Khaim then hit upon his scheme to gain more personal power and, with the hags' help, began feeding the cauldron *wishes*. The power the cauldron has acquired isn't nearly enough to accomplish Khaim's goal, but it's still a mighty magic item, and perhaps even an artifact. Periodically, it acts of its own accord, perhaps attempting to fulfill wishes it hears, suggesting that it might be intelligent and self-aware.

A void hag coven can use the cauldron as their stellar cauldron, gaining the powers associated with that item. However, the cauldron can also be used to cast *clairaudience/clairvoyance* twice per day, *telepathy* once per day (can be cast from the location of the *clairaudience/clairvoyance* sensor), and *vision* once per month. All these effects have a caster level equal to the user's character level.

The *Fivefold Cauldron* can be installed on a starship—attempting to do so causes it to sprout cables and connection ports automatically. Aboard the ship, it functions as a hardened computer with a tier equal to half the tier of the starship. (As the technology around it increases, it increases in tier.) It has a number of large secure data modules equal to its tier and a control module that allows it to control the starship. It also has security IV and the following countermeasures: alarm (telepathic and comm signal), feedback, and lockout. The cauldron's personality integrates with the *Sun Diver's* artificial personality, but has decidedly evil tendencies. This computer doesn't need power, and if the PCs augment it with a starship computer, that device needs 20 fewer PCUs (minimum 0).

Uninstalling the *Fivefold Cauldron* requires a PC to attempt a DC 40 Engineering or Mysticism check. On failure by 5 or more, the cauldron shuts down. Only a void hag can reactivate it.

The cauldron weighs 10 bulk.

to benefit from their guard's protection ability. Once he's used about half his ammunition for one load (60 rounds), he moves to a position where all the PCs are within a 60-foot cone, then burns through the rest of his ammunition with automatic fire. He is then likely to engage in melee rather than reload.

Morale Khaim fights not just for his command and his reputation, but for what he believes to be his chance to ascend to demigod status. He fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str +8; **Dex** +6; **Con** +4; **Int** +3; **Wis** +1; **Cha** +4

Skills Athletics +23, Intimidate +28, Mysticism +23

Languages Aklo, Aquan, Auran, Common, Ignan, Infernal, Terran; telepathy 100 ft.

Other Abilities change shape (humanoid)

Gear d-suit IV (mk 1 magic resistor^{AR}, mk 2 thermal capacitor), *defiant vorpal medium machine gun* with 240 heavy weapon rounds, *devastating grindblade*, *mantle of willpower*, hot siccate control rod, personal comm unit

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Elemental Fire (Su) See page 13, but this ability deals 3d4 fire damage instead of 2d4.

Scorching Ray (Su) As an attack, Khaim can launch a ray of fire with a range increment of 30 feet and a maximum range of 90 feet.

HONOR GUARD GOLEM (2)

CR 11

XP 12,800 each

Variant efreeti cybernetic golem (*Starfinder Adventure Path* #13: *Fire Starters* 59; *Starfinder Alien Archive* 2 66)

NE Large construct (magical, technological)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *see invisibility*;

Perception +25

DEFENSE

HP 180 EACH

EAC 24; **KAC** 26

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

Defensive Abilities guard Khaim; **DR** 5/adamantine or wound; **Immunities** construct immunities, fire, magic

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee ultrathin curveblade +24 (3d10+22 S; critical bleed 2d6)

Ranged scorching ray +21 (3d8+11 F; critical burn 3d4)

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

Offensive Abilities elemental fire, haste circuit

TACTICS

During Combat Thanks to their senses, the honor guard golems know where Khaim is even if he is invisible.

Although one of them tries to stay adjacent to him, they switch off to add confusion as to his location.

Morale The honor guards fight until Khaim orders them to stand down. If Khaim dies, they fight on until destroyed.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Athletics +25, Intimidate +20

Languages Ignan

Other Abilities comm, unliving

Gear ultrathin curveblade

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Comm (Ex) An honor guard golem can receive wireless communications (and thus commands from Khaim) at planetary range.

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Elemental Fire (Su) See page 13, but this ability deals 3d4 fire damage instead of 2d4.

Guard General Khaim (Ex) When General Khaim is hit by an attack while adjacent to an honor guard golem, the construct must use its reaction, if it can, to intercede taking half the damage while Khaim takes the other half. Any condition the attack imparts applies to both the golem and Khaim.

Haste Circuit (Su) An honor guard golem can use a swift action to gain the benefit of the *haste* spell. This effect lasts for 1 round, and then the circuit shuts down and must recharge for 1 round before being activated again. The golem can use its circuit up to 10 rounds per day.

Magic Immunity (Ex) See *Alien Archive 2* 66–67.

Scorching Ray (Su) As an attack, an honor guard golem can launch a ray of fire with a range increment of 30 feet and a maximum range of 90 feet.

Development: Now that they have both siccitate control rods, the PCs can shut down the *planar tethers*. When they do so, read or paraphrase the following text.

The machinery generating the *planar tethers* ceases creating the green energy and black motes, cycling down to a dull hum. The fetters tying the Far Portal to the Crucible dissipate. As they do, the portal bobs upward, disappearing into the solar plasma.

The hags now attempt to claim the *Fivefold Cauldron*. They fight if they must, breaking any deal they had with the PCs.

Countdown: The countdown stops when the PCs defeat General Khaim and release the Far Portal from the *planar tethers* back to the surface of the sun.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

When the countdown stops and the PCs deal with the hags, if they remain, the group can leave the Crucible whenever they like, their mission a success. They might face additional resistance during their escape if they left any of the Crucible's forces intact before dealing with the *planar tethers*, but if few foes remain aboard the station, these survivors might well avoid those who bested their general. It's up to you, as the GM, whether the PCs' have an uneventful departure.

The PCs can then set a course for Kahlannal to pick up DCI agents and visit anassanoi friends, then return to the Burning Archipelago. After dropping off any DCI agents to Stellacuna, the PCs are free to go where they will. News of their accomplishments slowly spreads, and the PCs become heroes in the Pact Worlds and perhaps beyond. Nevertheless, they are likely to encounter fallout, previously unknown enemies, and new opportunities from their missions into the sun—see the Continuing the Campaign article on page 41 for details on such possibilities and what the DCI might get up to next.

The *Fivefold Cauldron* is a trophy the PCs can keep for the rest of their careers, reminding them of their successful defeat of the efreeti invasion and the completion of this Adventure Path. The device isn't without its dangers, however, especially if news of its existence falls on the wrong ears.



CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

"Then, the efreeti attack just broke off. Their troops rallied and regrouped, and even though we had given as good as we got, I thought they were reinforcing. Thought we were done for. But the battle in the sky died down, and the soldiers on the ground never renewed the assault. By the time our brass ordered the counterattack, the efreet were already retreating. Later, I heard that some specialists from the DCI—same people who beat the Sunrise Collective—attacked the efreeti HQ, get this, inside... the... sun! Inside! Burning Mother, I hope I meet them someday. They're gods-honest heroes."

—Sergeant Leensay Kon, Asanatown Defense

The Dawn of Flame Adventure Path ends when the PCs defeat General Khaim, return Far Portal to the surface of the sun, and end the Malikah's immediate threat to the Burning Archipelago. However, the general's fall doesn't end the possibility of adventures that spin off from the heroes' path through the depths of Mataras.

What if the PCs lose? If the PCs fail to stop General Khaim, he conquers the Burning Archipelago, keeps Far Portal at the Crucible, reinforces his beachhead, and imposes the Malikah's dominion over the sun. The general and his forces retake Kahlannal, subjugate the anassanois, and use the city as a supply point. It's also likely the efreet take Noma, as well as other deep-sun sites as yet undiscovered. The Malikah moves to the Burning Archipelago and displaces Sarenrae as the deific figure there. Perhaps General Khaim takes a place at the Malikah's side. Regardless, she can use the power of the sun to enforce her will, cruelly garnering the worship she craves.

Anassanoi Integration: The PCs made first contact with the anassanois in Kahlannal. Now, the anassanois want to join the Pact Worlds community, and a number of shirrrens want to help. These species share a similar story of being cast homeless into the wider galaxy. The anassanois lack coherent records of their kin, but the shirrrens have records of similar species they passed during their flight from the Swarm. No doubt, the Swarm pursuing the shirrrens ravaged some of these systems. Finding out more requires risky surveys of those stars. The reward is a chance to help two species learn more of their pasts.

Asanatown Renaissance: Asanatown is finally free of the psychic disturbance emanating from the anassanois' *psychic resonator* filtered through Ezorod. However, Khaim's defeat doesn't mean an end to the bubble's troubles. Radical paramilitary elements remain, perhaps emboldened by their prominent role defending the Burning Archipelago from the efreet. An influx of lashuntas from all over the Pact Worlds hurts as much as it helps. Asanatown has no shortage of hands for rebuilding and renewal—but also has many disenfranchised. The growing pains might require more than political solutions, especially if a leader like Zeylan Trinipol rises again.

The Fivefold Cauldron: In their defeat of General Khaim and the void hags at Crucible, the PCs found the *Fivefold Cauldron*. People across the galaxy would kill to have the chance to study or own such an artifact—including other void hags. The potential contained within the cauldron could be more than anyone knows, for it contains countless distilled wishes. In addition, the cauldron has attained a measure of sentience. If this awareness grows to true sapience, the *Fivefold Cauldron* could itself become a threat.

Gangland Fallout: PCs helped Lurian "Lu" Straza and were able to use the *Sun Diver* in return. However, the fame of the *Sun Diver* is assured with the PCs' and DCI's rise to high esteem. Taza Nepobo or other leaders of the Vestrani cartel realize they might have made a mistake in letting the experimental starship go so easily. They call in Lu's remaining debt. Absent that, they can still threaten Lu and the PCs. The cartel doesn't need or

want money, however—the services of famed solar explorers will do very nicely, instead.

Rebuilding the Archipelago: The Burning Archipelago suffered under the efreet attack. However, new tech acquired during the Adventure Path can help make the bubble-city better than new, especially the faulty Corona bubble. The effort faces problems beyond the obvious. Remnants of General Khaim's forces aim to make the PCs and the citizens of the Burning Archipelago pay, engaging in regular attacks. Anacites of the Temple of the First Ones and the Those Who Wait faction oppose alteration of the Archipelago's infrastructure, especially with technology from Ezorod or Kahlannal. In the midst of such disagreements, a psychic sickness appears among telepaths, coinciding with the arrival of anassanois on the Burning Archipelago. Are the anassanois carriers, or are they victims of a plan to sow more chaos?

Return to Noma: The PCs had only a brief chance to survey Noma. Now, the DCI is organizing a larger mission. This plan comes to the attention of the anacites of the Temple of the First Ones, and news spreads to Aballon. Countless anacites want to meet their intrasolar kin, but others see Noma as their domain or a preserve to be protected from further intrusion. Overcoming anacite opposition is the mission's first step; the actual return, likely with anacite aid, is the second. How has Noma adapted to the earlier incursions? Has the mysterious Directive: Null caused changes? Could it be a threat to anacite visitors?

Sarenite Campaign: Lashuntas of the Church of the Burning Mother remember not only the despair they felt for decades, but also how the Burning Archipelago suffered at the hands of treacherous efreet. In Sarenrae's Radiant Cathedral in Dawnshore, militant members find common ground with their lashunta counterparts. These factions share an idea—the efreet should be shown the error of attacking those living on the Material Plane. These Sarenites have begun to build an army, recruiting those seeking revenge on forces from the Plane of Fire. They plan to take the Malikah's war back to her, with interest. This plot pulls the PCs in two directions. Those planning the campaign want the PCs on board as the heroes who did so much to stop General Khaim, but calmer leaders urge the PCs to stand against the campaign, lest war erupt from the sun to flow into the Pact Worlds again.

Sun Delving: Thanks to the PCs, the DCI is the toast of the Pact Worlds, possessing advanced sun-diving technology and the funds necessary to put it to use. The DCI makes extensive plans to seek out other deep-sun sites. The Church of Sarenrae becomes a major source of funding when the organization decides to explore the possibility of other Burning Archipelagos floating in the atmosphere of other stars. In addition, the portal technology discovered in Noma and the Crucible suggests that such portals might be hidden in the Burning Archipelago. Sarenites and anacites of the Temple of the First Ones sponsor expeditions into unexplored and forgotten sectors of the Archipelago to discover if such tech exists. It does—and one of these portals leads to a site in the Azlanti Star Empire.

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PYRIC VICTORY

After the PCs defeat General Khaim, they begin to have strange dreams. Even those unable to dream have bizarre reveries. These visions show a lightless room broken open by burning light that pours in and scours the place clean, followed by a sense of freedom and purpose, a sense of knowing the PCs, and a sense of gratitude. After the dreams begin, the PCs receive a slightly garbled transmission. A PC trained in Computers or Mysticism can clarify the message, realizing that it is not quite in sync with the PCs' reality.

The message displays a being with some resemblance to the Noma mummy. Its flesh and clothing phase out to offer glimpses of stars being born, consuming worlds, and ending darkness. As this figure speaks, it moves each of its six arms as if manipulating a set of invisible devices around it. The message of the Eshtayiv's Voice is as follows.

"Thanks given to you, Breakers of the Seventh Seal. The Eshtayiv sounds this Voice to give of their bounty. If accepted, come."

Any analysis of the message shows it to be in Aklo, but the PCs understand the Eshtayiv's Voice as if the creature were speaking their native tongue. As the Eshtayiv's Voice finishes speaking, the PCs receive coordinates. The course takes them to Aucturn among the Shattered Hulks in orbit there (*Starfinder Pact Worlds* 146).

The coordinates point to a glowing derelict vessel called the *Memories of War*. This pre-Gap starship casts impossible shadows on the PCs' vessel, disturbing to the eye and mind. After the PCs arrive, the most observant among them picks out an errant star in the vastness beyond the Pact Worlds. This mote slowly grows. The wait is long enough to allow the PCs to explore the *Memories of War*, but the Eshtayiv's Voice eventually arrives, glowing with inner fire. The creature offers each PC a boon, which can be anything that can be produced with a wish spell, or a magic or hybrid item of up to item level 15. Each item or wish comes with corruption or a curse, which the Eshtayiv's Voice neglects to mention, related to the item or wish's nature. In general, these baleful aspects are intended to slowly turn the PCs' mindsets closer to the consuming evil that the Eshtayiv represents. The Eshtayiv's Voice honors those who refuse this boon as "selfless liberators" but is clearly disappointed in them.

Then, the Eshtayiv's Voice makes another offer, as follows.

"Now, Aucturn awakens to the Incandescent Doom. Breakers, you should stand with the Voice and amid the Eshtayiv. Their Voice soon sings a clarion call to shake the Old Ones in their darkened graves and lightless eggs. The Eshtayiv voyages in dream. They come. For your aid, you shall receive all their light has to offer."

The proposal is straightforward, and the PCs understand the intent even if the meaning of the words eludes them. They are to join the Eshtayiv's Voice in acting against the forces on Aucturn, and as a reward, they will receive another great boon. If PCs refuse, the Eshtayiv's Voice expresses regret and descends to the planet, landing in the Dark Valley (*Pact Worlds* 142). Such reluctant "Breakers" continue to receive visions and dreams of the Eshtayiv's Voice in which it first converts the denizens of Dark Valley into its servants, then turns its attention to the Chalkmound Ziggurats before turning southeast toward the potential raw material of the Meatwalking Prison, renewing a fortified presence at the Blackened Key, and then making a beeline toward the Gravid Mound, taking Grindhold on the way.

If the PCs agree to help the Eshtayiv's Voice, the being expresses great pleasure and sends an impression of glorious slaughter. As long as they support the Eshtayiv's Voice, the PCs receive more reveries, giving them targets to attack based on the path the Eshtayiv's Voice wishes to take. Every mission they carry out ends with the arrival of the Eshtayiv's Voice or other servants of the Eshtayiv. With each success, the Eshtayiv illuminates more of Aucturn's darkness. Soon, Aucturn is embroiled in open war among its factions and the minions of the Eshtayiv. It becomes clear the Eshtayiv's Voice intends to scorch Aucturn clean, ensuring whatever it is, especially in the Gravid Mound, never comes to fruition.

Eventually, the PCs dream of another errant star at the solar system's edge, just within view of Aucturn. This vision suggests the Eshtayiv is gathering strength to allow them to manifest. Such a being's arrival in the Pact Worlds could be nothing less than catastrophic. And, the PCs realize, each victory they deliver is a sacrifice that brings the Incandescent Doom closer to reality. The Eshtayiv's Voice reassures the PCs that the Eshtayiv intends only to bring cleansing light to the darkness.

If allowed even a foothold on Aucturn's surface, the Eshtayiv's Voice eventually creates a legion of pyric undead and gathers a throng of pyric harbingers from deep space. (See *Starfinder Adventure Path #16: The Blind City* for more on these creatures.) PCs who turn against the Eshtayiv's Voice face not only these hordes, but also the forces of Aucturn arrayed against them. As a foe, the Eshtayiv's Voice is a relentless, nearly immortal enemy. To kill it requires more than conventional violence.

The resilience of the Eshtayiv's Voice is due to its displaced soul. This spirit resides in a "soul locus," a glowing crystalline orb on a nameless planet in the Vast that has never known darkness. Finding this hidden world is hard enough, and making it through the servants of the Eshtayiv to the locus is a prodigious task. Worse, when the locus comes under attack, the Eshtayiv's Voice can manifest near it in seconds to defend its soul.

THE ESHTAYIV'S VOICE

CR 15

XP 51,200

CE Large aberration

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., see in darkness, see invisibility, sense through (life) 60 ft.; **Perception** +26**Aura** alien presence (30 ft., DC 19, sickened 1d4 rounds)

DEFENSE

HP 250

EAC 28; **KAC** 28**Fort** +13; **Ref** +13; **Will** +20**Defensive Abilities** amorphous, ash consumption, rejuvenation (2d4 days), undying, void adaptation; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, electricity, exhaustion, fatigue, fire, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (Su, perfect)**Melee** slam +23 (5d8+15 B & F plus pyric curse; critical burn 3d4)**Ranged** arcing pyric beam +23 (4d6+15 F plus pyric curse; critical burn 3d4)**Offensive Abilities** pyric fire**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 15th)1/day—*call cosmos* (pyric fire), summon allies (2 pyric harbingers 80%)3/day—*confusion* (DC 24), *greater invisibility*, *mind probe* (DC 24), *wall of fire* (pyric fire)At will—*clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *dispel magic*, *mind thrust* (3rd level; DC 23)Constant—*see invisibility*, *nondetection*

STATISTICS

Str +0; **Dex** +7; **Con** +5; **Int** +5; **Wis** +3; **Cha** +9**Skills** Acrobatics +26 (+34 to fly), Bluff +26, Intimidate +31, Mysticism +31, Sense Motive +26**Languages** Aklo; *truespeech*; telepathy 100 ft.**Other Abilities** brightly illuminated, compression, phase, solar adaptation, spaceflight (Mysticism)**Gear** *pulsar captive-star amulet*^{AR}

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Alien Presence (Su) Unlike with most alien presence auras, a creature must succeed at the saving throw to become immune to this aura for 24 hours.**Arcing Pyric Beam (Su)** Once per round as a standard action, the Eshtayiv's Voice can launch a bolt of spirit-fire out to a range of 120 feet. This attack has the line weapon special property. Once per round after hitting a target, whether it damages that target or not, the Eshtayiv's Voice can make the line bend once, causing it to continue along a new trajectory.**Ash Consumption (Su)** When a creature within 30 feet of the Eshtayiv's Voice takes fire damage, the Eshtayiv's Voice regains a number of Hit Points equal to the amount of damage the target took, up to 15 per round.**Brightly Illuminated (Su)** Light within 30 feet of the Eshtayiv's Voice increases by two steps. Light for 30 more feet beyond that increases by one step. Magical darkness decreases this light only if the darkness is from a source with a CR or level of 16 or higher.**Phase (Su)** The Eshtayiv's Voice can move through objects as if it were incorporeal.**Pyric Curse (Su)** See page 58 of *Starfinder Adventure Path #16: The Blind City*; Fortitude DC 23, 3d4 fire damage.**Pyric Fire (Su)** See page 58 of *Starfinder Adventure Path #16: The Blind City*; Fortitude DC 23.**Rejuvenation (Su)** When the Eshtayiv's Voice is destroyed, its soul locus begins to rebuild the creature. After 2d4 days, the Eshtayiv's Voice awakens fully healed with its gear within 30 feet of the locus.**Undying (Su)** The Eshtayiv's Voice doesn't age. It has no need to eat, drink, or sleep.

THE ESHTAYIV'S VOICE

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SCORCHED DIVINITY

The defeat of General Khaim sent shock waves rippling through the Sovereignty of the Crimson Sun on the Plane of Fire. Of all the beings affected by his loss, none were shaken more than the person who commanded him, the Malikah. Not only was her ascension to a demigoddess halted, but she also lost her most trusted commander and, some whisper, her closest confidant. The Malikah raged for days, then smoldered quietly for longer, brewing plans. She doesn't give up her ambitions, merely formulates new methods to accomplish them.

Her agent Klangai (agender efreeti noble) goes with an entourage in search of the PCs. Upon finding them, Klangai invites the PCs to attend the Malikah in her palace on Sakalayo Peak (see page 51). This new edifice isn't the Malikah's true home, which is an estate in the center of her empire's largest settlement, Prominence. The efreeti doesn't take no for an answer, informing the PCs that failure to return with the entourage means death. Klangai gives the PCs 3 days before trying to take them there by force. If Klangai fails, the Malikah dispatches a mightier platoon of fire creatures to haul the PCs before her.

Klangai or a similar agent can travel via *plane shift* to Sakalayo Peak because of special ritual foci the Malikah and her mystics have created for just this purpose. The PCs and their chaperones arrive before the palace gates. They then enter, touring the palace to impress upon the PCs the Malikah's splendor. Sakalayo Palace is opulent, decorated with brass, fire opals, obsidian, and other similar materials, along with lava flows, fountains, and fire in arcs and whirlwinds. Her remaining military might is also evident in the fiery sentinels throughout the grounds.

In the throne room, the Malikah sits upon a seat of lava, some of it crust and some flow. She acknowledges the PCs' might. However, she has not given up her march to divinity, and she could use strong servants such as the PCs. They can serve her, vow to leave her alone under bonds of magic, or face her full wrath. As the Malikah's heralds, the PCs could enjoy rewards most only dream of. As her enemies, they face fiery extinction.

What happens next depends on what the PCs decide. Those who agree to help the Malikah might participate in her campaigns on the Plane of Fire against elemental lords. They could foment her worship on the Material Plane. Perhaps they could participate in intrigues to undermine the sultana of the City of Brass and weaken the Dominion of Flame. With a wave of her hand in her throne room, the Malikah casts PCs who choose to ignore her generosity, or who vow to work against her, into the depths of Sakalayo Peak. (The PCs might be able to sense and head off this magical trap.)

In the primal volcanic tunnels, the PCs face not only ancient, hideous creatures of fire and magma, but also magical fetters that bind them body and soul. To escape the fiery maze with

their lives, they must defeat the mountain's four guardians and undo the binding magic. However, within the prison, the PCs can find allies who are themselves captives in the fiery dungeon. When the PCs break free, they face the forces still within Sakalayo Palace.

To attack the Malikah thereafter, the PCs must journey to Prominence through the Sovereignty of the Crimson Sun. Before they do, however, they can traverse the Plane of Fire to seek other supporters. Numerous personages on the plane, from Grand Sultana Ayasellah Mihelar Khalidlah VI of the City of Brass to the elemental lords Ymeri and Atreia, see the Malikah as an upstart or an enemy. Such allies, along with those gathered under Sakalayo Peak, could tip the scales against the Malikah.

THE MALIKAH

CR 22

XP 614,400

LE Large outsider (extraplanar, fire, evil, lawful)

Init +11; **Senses** *arcane sight*, blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, *true seeing*; **Perception** +42

DEFENSE

HP 500 RP 7

EAC 38; **KAC** 39

Fort +20; **Ref** +18; **Will** +23

Defensive Abilities fiery mantle, regeneration 20 (cold; see text); **DR** 15/magic; **Immunities** ability damage, ability drain, charm effects, compulsion effects, death effects, energy drain, fire, petrification; **SR** 27

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft. (Su, perfect)

Melee *the Malikah's Staff* +35 (13d8+32 B & F; critical bind and burn 5d6) or slam +35 (17d6+32 B & F; critical burn 5d6 and knockdown)

Ranged penetrating scorching ray +33 (6d10+22 F; critical burn 5d6 and wound)

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

Offensive Abilities devastating elemental fire, greater fire affinity

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 22nd, ranged +34)

1/day—*disintegrate* (deals fire damage, DC 28),
holographic image (6th-level, DC 28)

3/day—*dismissal* (5th level, DC 27), *greater command* (DC 27), *greater invisibility*, *unwilling guardian* (DC 27),
wish (for non-genies only)

At will—*dimension door*, *dispel magic*, *pyroclastic eddy* (as *cosmic eddy*, but the damage is B & F, DC 26),
explosive blast (DC 25), *plane shift* (willing targets to the elemental planes, Astral Plane, or Material Plane only), *wall of fire*

Constant—*arcane sight*, *true seeing*

STATISTICS

Str +10; **Dex** +7; **Con** +8; **Int** +7; **Wis** +7; **Cha** +13

Skills Acrobatics +37 (+45 to fly), Bluff +37, Diplomacy +37, Intimidate +42, Mysticism +42, Sense Motive +42

Feats Agile Casting, Improved Sidestep, Mobility, Shot on the Run, Sidestep, Spring Attack

Languages Aquan, Auran, Celestial, Common, Ignan, Infernal, Terran; telepathy 100 ft.

Other Abilities change shape (humanoid)

Gear the Malikah's Robes, the Malikah's Staff, mk 4 tiara of translocation

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Devastating Elemental Fire (Su) The Malikah can cause any weapon she wields to deal half its damage as fire damage, making the weapon neither archaic nor nonlethal. If the weapon already deals two damage types, this effect replaces one with fire. In addition, the Malikah grants weapons she wields the burn 5d6 critical hit effect. The Malikah can apply this critical hit effect in addition to one other critical hit effect the weapon has.

Fiery Mantle (Su) Whenever the Malikah's fire immunity prevents her from taking fire damage from an attack, she regains 10 Hit Points. In addition, this ability removes the vulnerability to cold normal for the fire subtype.

Greater Fire Affinity (Su) Five times per day, with attacks that deal fire damage, the Malikah can roll a single attack twice and take the higher result. In addition, any fire damage the Malikah deals ignores fire resistance and treats immunity to fire as fire resistance 20.

Penetrating Scorching Ray (Su) As an attack, the Malikah can launch a ray of fire with a range increment of 60 feet and a maximum range of 120 feet. This ray ignores 22 points of hardness.

Regeneration (Ex) The Malikah must be in a hot (90° F) or hotter area for her regeneration to function.

THE MALIKAH'S GEAR

The Malikah has two unique items: her robes, which she usually wears, and her staff, which she keeps at hand.

THE MALIKAH'S ROBES

LEVEL 20

MAGIC ITEM (WORN) PRICE 1,000,000 BULK 1

These unique robes provide protection as modern light armor that grants a +21 bonus to EAC and a +22 bonus to KAC, and has five upgrade slots. The robes also function as a *mk 3 diffraction cloak* (Starfinder Armory 112). They adjust in size automatically for you, spontaneously adjusting to fit new humanoid-shaped forms from Large to Small. Fire, gravity, solar forces, and similar environmental conditions can't damage these garments.

THE MALIKAH'S STAFF

LEVEL 20

MAGIC WEAPON PRICE 1,250,000 BULK 1

This unique two-handed basic melee weapon is an ornate, bejeweled magic battle staff of exceptional make. The staff deals 13d8 points of bludgeoning damage, and it has the analog, block, and reach special weapon properties, as well as the bind critical hit effect. The staff also functions as a *pulsar captive-star amulet* (Starfinder Armory 120) but with two free uses per day. Fire, gravity, solar forces, and similar environmental conditions cannot damage this weapon.



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THE PLANE OF FIRE

“Oh, my homeland? Yes, yes, yes, of course I hail from the Eternal Furnace—or as you Material-dwellers usually call it, the Plane of Fire. It’s quite the sight, and I highly suggest that everyone take the opportunity to visit the City of Brass at least once in their life. The new grand sultana has really done a great job of encouraging foreign trade. I know the efreet have a bit of a bad reputation when it comes to outsiders, but I can honestly say that business has never been more fruitful back in my home. Now, with those pleasantries out of the way, maybe we can start talking about curtain color choices...?”

—Pajavamal, mephit interior decorator

The hostile realm of the Plane of Fire has traditionally been renowned throughout the cosmos for being one of the most difficult planes of existence for living beings to visit. With the ongoing march of technological advancement, however, the Plane of Fire has become more open to visitors. The simple environmental protections afforded by most technological armor are sufficient to allow most living creatures to cope in the plane's more metropolitan areas, and even venture into the harsher vistas beyond. Past the settled regions of the Plane of Fire, however, expanses of lava seas, volcanic plains, and even open skies so hot they match the intense temperatures of stars stretch out endlessly in all directions.

While efreet claim much of the Plane of Fire's territory, enclaves, holdouts, and even a few minor empires within the immeasurable expanse of the Eternal Furnace operate independently. In addition, the Plane of Fire holds the domains of several deities, including the elemental lord Ymeri, Queen of the Inferno, and the mysterious demigoddess Feronia, the Fertile Flame.

For those willing to brave the dangers both physical and political, the Plane of Fire can be a realm of dazzling beauty and untold treasures.

PLANAR TRAITS

The Plane of Fire has certain properties that remain consistent across it and distinguish it from other planes.

NORMAL GRAVITY AND TIME

Essentially an endless expanse defined by its blazing nature, the Plane of Fire and its constituent regions exert their own localized gravitational pull on creatures within them, just like on the Material Plane. Time within the Plane of Fire passes at the same rate as time on the Material Plane.

IMMEASURABLE

Like the Material Plane, the Plane of Fire remains an immeasurable domain, expanding out in every direction. While maps exist of major regions within the plane, there's always more to find, and many planar explorers have gone mad attempting to chart the realm's entirety.

MILDLY NEUTRAL-ALIGNED

While the Plane of Fire has a slight metaphysical alignment with neutrality, creatures of any alignment can exist within it without taking any penalties.

ENHANCED AND IMPEDED MAGIC

Spells with the fire descriptor are greatly enhanced on the Plane of Fire. Such a spell functions as if its caster level were 2 higher than normal. Conversely, spells with the water descriptor are impeded within the Plane of Fire. There is a 25% chance that an impeded spell simply fails. Otherwise, the spell functions normally.

FIRE-DOMINANT

The atmosphere of the Plane of Fire functions as extreme heat, and unprotected flammable materials catch fire almost immediately, including unprotected flammable clothing worn by individuals. In addition, all creatures take a varying degree of fire damage (anywhere from 1d3 to 3d10) each round while on a fire-dominant plane. Creatures of the water subtype are extremely uncomfortable on fire-dominant planes, and those that are made of water (such as water elementals) take double the normal amount of fire damage from the plane each round.

Some areas on the Plane of Fire have been made hospitable using special technological devices, magical effects, or wishcraft. These areas prevent a creature from catching fire, though the creature must still generally activate their armor's environmental protections or otherwise take precautions to endure the high temperatures.

DENIZENS

While a wide variety of different species live on the Plane of Fire, some denizens are more prominent. The following are just a few examples of those species who call the Inferno their home.

AZERS

For recorded history, azers have been one of the Plane of Fire's most populous species. Sturdy and similar in build to dwarves, these people have a long and tragic history of toiling within fortresses and settlements across the plane. In ages past, the efreet managed to subjugate most of the azer populace, forcing those hardworking people to labor for the advancement of the efreeti agenda. Many azers believe that status quo was interrupted during the Gap, when the azers banded together to form vast unions across efreeti holdings, signing strict devil-enforced work contracts with their former masters that remain in force today. While the majority of azers within efreeti settlements are still looked down upon, they remain proud of their heritage, and work for corporations such as the notorious Excoriation Combine or Obsidian Spike Industries for fair wages. More information about azers can be found on page 55 of *Starfinder Adventure Path #13: Fire Starters*.

EFREET

Still the most powerful force within the Plane of Fire, the fire genies known as efreet oversee numerous nation-states and small empires within the Inferno. Most efreet dwell within the luxury of their notable settlements, with the most influential maintaining villas within the legendary City of Brass (see page 49). Those seeking to advance within the genies' complex hierarchy often serve military terms aboard impressive starships commissioned by efreeti nations. The most powerful and well-respected of these empires is the Dominion of Flame, a political entity to which all other

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efreeti nations and warlords pay at least some tribute. Traditionally assured of their rightful dominance of the plane, the efreet saw this confidence sorely tested in the years following the Gap, when they contended not only with a loss of memory, but with the stirrings of revolution from their azer and mephitis servants. The efreet have only recently managed to form a semblance of stability within the Everlasting Flame. Many believe the stability is the direct result of keen maneuvering by the current council that leads the Dominion of Flame, who opened major efreeti settlements—including the City of Brass—to extraplanar travelers, along with granting unprecedentedly lenient trade deals. More information about efreet can be found on page 59 of *Starfinder Adventure Path #13: Fire Starters*.

FIRE ELEMENTALS

Few fire elementals care for the opinions of outsiders, as they tend to act more as forces of nature than as part of any society within the Plane of Fire. Despite this, many visitors to the Plane of Fire seek to entreat with the roiling masses of living flame. Whether by magical force or skillful coaxing, visitors sometimes manage to secure elementals'

services as enforcers and agents of combustion on their planes of origins—though failure in such dealings can be decidedly uncomfortable.

FIRE MEPHITS

Fire mephits fill a variety of niches within the Plane of Fire's most complex societies. While they have settlements and nations of their own, many mephits find personal satisfaction in offering their services to greater powers and extraplanar visitors. Mephits maintain a culture that is distinctly their own, yet enjoy learning about those of others—both to adopt choice innovations for themselves and to mercilessly mock other races. To accomplish this, mephits often take on tasks beneath the more powerful efreet. Many corporations within the Inferno employ legions of mephits to handle tasks like delivering messages, accounting, or personnel management. Those mephits who excel in such positions often move into more prestigious roles, such as consultants for larger concerns. More information about all types of mephits can be found on page 56 of *Starfinder Adventure Path #14: Soldiers of Brass*.

IFRITS

The recent opening of the Plane of Fire to more extraplanar visitors has somewhat eased the previous intolerance shown towards the realm's plane-touched offspring—ifrits. These impulsive humanoids have come to serve as a bridge between the Material Plane and the Plane of Fire, able to move easily between both planes of existence, though sometimes without feeling they truly belong in either. Many efreeti nobles have come to retain the services of skilled ifrit intermediaries to act on their behalf on the Material Plane, while many Material Plane-based corporations do likewise on the Plane of Fire. More information about ifrits can be found on page 60 of *Starfinder Adventure Path #13: Fire Starters*.

MAGMINS

Once a people who distrusted strangers to the point of initiating vicious massacres to protect their homes, magmins have adapted well to the recent influx of extraplanar trade. These small creatures have opened businesses throughout the Eternal Furnace's many lakes and pools of lava and magma. Often marketing these holdings as exotic spas, magmins cater to less combat-inclined extraplanar visitors. By maintaining this simple business model, magmins have kept their true homelands safe from the interest of both foreign powers and native forces such as the efreet. Unlike mephits, who've given up much of their territory and rights, magmins fiercely maintain their ancestral culture and work to protect their most sacred sites and homes from exploitation by offering up a small fraction of their territories to outside scrutiny. When not protecting their homes, magmins tend to

FIRE MEPHIT

exhibit a surprisingly roguish nature. More information about magmins and the playful acts they perform on the Material Plane can be found on page 57 of *Starfinder Adventure Path #16: The Blind City*.

SALAMANDERS

These serpentine creatures once hailed exclusively from the Plane of Fire, but underwent a desperate exodus when persecuted by the ever-expanding efreeti empire; many ended up surviving on the Material Plane or finding succor with the demon lord Flauros on the Abyss. With the recent civil unrest within the Everlasting Flame caused by the chaos of the Gap, salamanders have returned to their home plane in ever-increasing numbers. Salamanders now occupy the fringes of the Inferno in independent settlements, or within the more settled regions of the Plane of Fire as advisors, artisans, or specialists working for other planar interests. More information about salamanders can be found on page 60 of *Starfinder Adventure Path #14: Soldiers of Brass*.



DOMINION OF
FLAME EMBLEM

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

With the abundance of technology now available to the people of the Material Plane, hazardous planes like the Plane of Fire have undergone a renaissance of foreign exploration.

AURORIC PALACE

The Auroric Palace is home to the elemental lord Ymeri, Queen of the Inferno, who some say is the most powerful entity on the Plane of Fire. This sprawling stronghold, constructed from crystallized flames that still shimmer despite their solidity, sits on a wide swath of crystal, metal, and stone that is constantly being incinerated by the structure's heat. Consequently, a perpetual haze of vaporized metal and colorful plumes of steam surround the palace. Some believe the changing hues in these clouds reflect Ymeri's current mood, but the Queen of the Inferno is quick to point to the columns of smoke as proof that the element of fire will always triumph over the element of earth, despite the fact that the two planes haven't engaged in open warfare for several centuries now. Ymeri entertains supplicants—those that can withstand the fire—in her palace, but some factions believe she is growing increasingly irrelevant as technology brings the inhabitants of all the planes closer together.

CHORTLING SPRINGS OF A HUNDRED WONDERS

Perhaps the most famous of all the magmin-operated resorts on the Plane of Fire, the Chortling Springs are the closest thing

to a sacred site that magmins allow outsiders to view. Since the springs themselves are almost a mile from the resort, they enjoy none of the hybrid technology that makes the resort complex hospitable to non-natives. Many visitors purchase or rent sets of personal armor so they can make the journey to the springs, while the most affluent purchase powerful magical enhancements that allow them to bathe in the supposedly rejuvenating boiling-hot mercury of the magmin springs. **Baiurk** (N male magmin; *Starfinder Adventure Path #16: The Blind City* 57) administers the resort, and while he does view the springs as a place of importance to his people, he understands that the springs aren't the real attraction of his resort. Instead, countless corporations and organizations arrange discreet meetings at the remote resort site, hoping to handle private matters away from the prying eyes of others. For a reasonable amount of credits, Baiurk ensures that corporate representatives and visiting dignitaries enjoy unparalleled anti-divination and anti-technological warding.

CITY OF BRASS

The City of Brass is the capital of the efreeti empire known as the Dominion of Flame, and the metropolis is generally regarded as the cultural center of the Plane of Fire. Prior to the events of the Gap, the city existed as the only major hub of extraplanar trade within the Everlasting Furnace, though the efreet have had to expand this policy to restore their former glory in the wake of several civil revolts and other Gap-related upheaval. Today, though the City of Brass is no longer the only trade hub for outsiders visiting the Plane of Fire, it remains the most prominent, and the city boasts an inordinate number of foreign visitors.

Grand Sultana Ayasellah Mihelar Khalidlah VI (LE female efreeti soldier; *Starfinder Adventure Path #13: Fire Starters* 59), Vengeance of the Flame and Khan of Magma, is the City of Brass's undisputed ruler and an esteemed member of the Dominion of Flame's ruling council. She came to power in the years following the Gap, executing swift and decisive policies to ensure the efreet's continued dominance in the new order, as well as ensuring the Plane of Fire's overall preparedness against foreign aggressors. While some efreet scoffed at the sultana's policy of granting azers and mephits more freedoms (including sanctioned unionization), many more recognize that without her actions, the resulting chaos would have dangerously weakened the efreet's hold on the Plane of Fire, making them susceptible to outside conquerors. Only a few centuries after the Gap, efreet maintain most of their former holdings and stand poised to expand with a rejuvenated military.

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Visitors to the City of Brass often find it exhibits a strange and growing dichotomy. Free trade markets exist throughout most of the city, with outsiders from all planes of existence trading wares or making business deals, yet phalanxes of Dominion of Flame soldiers ensure that the city's martial might is constantly on display, reminding residents that while the Sultana may be more welcoming than her predecessors, the efreet stand ready to maintain their authority at all costs.

CITY OF BRASS

LE metropolis

Population 9,000,000 (35% efreet, 15% salamanders, 15% mephits, 10% azers, 5% fire giants, 5% fire elementals, 15% other)

Government overlord (Grand Sultana Ayasellah Mihelar Khalidlah VI)

Qualities cultured, financial center, notorious, planar metropolis, technologically advanced

Maximum Item Level 20th

QUALITIES

Planar Metropolis A planar metropolis is a destination in the Great Beyond; one can expect to meet creatures from across the cosmos in settlements with this quality.

CRADLE OF FLAMES

The divine realm of the enigmatic Feronia, the Cradle of Flames is a dais of polished obsidian floating above a column of fire. The platform acts like an oasis, free from the plane's flames and featuring a wide variety of exotic flora and fauna not found anywhere else in the multiverse. Red-leafed bushes with bright orange blooms provide shade for small rabbitlike creatures with burning tails, while birds with wings of flame wheel around rocky tors. The site is protected by a coterie of powerful sentinels, including a quartet of phoenixes and Feronia's most powerful minion: the Guardian Blaze, an enormous creature with six wings and talons of molten obsidian. Since the Gap, Feronia has become even more reclusive, and many believe she's undergoing a period of deep meditation atop her home. The phoenix guardians viciously attack any who try to directly visit the demigoddess. Those few survivors of such excursions have reported the absence of many of her servants, and Feronia's faithful believes that her minions search the Inferno far and wide for a means of reviving their deity from her torpor.

EMBEREN RECESS

Once the site of an empire led by magma dragons, this volcanic region has since changed to become a melting pot of numerous native species and extraplanar visitors. During the chaos that followed the Gap, many of the leading magma dragons fled across the molten rock seas that surrounded the region, leaving the area in the care of a handful of their kind and their former servitors. Instead of the anarchy and infighting that many assumed would consume the region, the

Emberen Recess is now one of the most industrious locales within the Everlasting Furnace. A half-dozen corporate interests, including the Excoriation Combine and the Flames of Unity dragoncorp, own and lease spaces throughout the region. The most prestigious of these territories are the vast starship dry docks built upon the ancient sites of magma dragon fortresses. Rising up to ridiculous heights, the docks of the Emberen Recess allow for the construction of the largest starships within the Plane of Fire, and the resident corporations often vie for contracts with prestigious Material Plane enterprises and the Dominion of Flame.

FAHYIE NHIJAD

Resting between the walls of lava-filled canyons, the inverted cities of Fahyie Nhijad once belonged to a powerful efreet warlord who seceded from the Dominion of Flame and carved out a personal empire under the Plane of Fire's terrestrial surface. In the aftermath of the Gap, explorers and traders who frequented Fahyie Nhijad found the subterranean cities exposed by great fissures turned into canyons, and the displaced structures devoid of life. Restless ghosts (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 2 58), frenzied fire elementals, and even cursed ghuls (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #15: *Sun Divers* 56) roam the fractured streets of these exposed cities. Efreeti nobles and leaders from other species—especially azers and mephits—routinely hire adventurers and mercenaries to scour the ruins of these destroyed cities in hopes of uncovering the cause of Fahyie Nhijad's ruination, as whatever caused such overwhelming destruction could easily tip the balance of power within the plane.

INFERNO'S BLISS

Both fire and magma elementals partake in unnerving facsimiles of common Material Plane lives within this strange settlement. Taking on humanoid forms, these elementals oddly replicate roles of townsfolk from the earlier ages of various terrestrial worlds, especially lost Golarion. They've acquired countless riches and unique magical treasures in their time, and willingly trade with outsiders in exchange for other magical artifacts, though they have no interest in technological items, which they view as useless to their existence. Visitors to Inferno's Bliss should keep in mind one important fact: the elemental inhabitants of this place devoutly worship Ymeri, and any mention of her counterpart, the good elemental lord Atreia, the Lament Prince, is met with irrational rage that often turns to violence.

OPULENT PALACE OF SHUQU THE RADIANT

An attack on the senses floating lazily above the Inferno's landscape, this flying fortress is bedecked in brass, gemstones, and tapestries that refuse to combust. Owned by **Shuqu the Radiant** (CE agender efreeti mystic; *Starfinder Adventure Path* #13: *Fire Starters* 59), this fortress travels

the breadth of the Plane of Fire, stopping at seemingly random intervals to disgorge visitors and take in new would-be guests. The interior of the palace caters to the whims—noble and debased alike—of all its occupants. In a horrific twisting of wishcrafting, Shuqu employs a host of genies (including several non-efreeti) to routinely grant the wishes of their guests. Many guests enter the palace coaxed by the genie's offers, seeking their every wish granted or to escape the banality of their current existence. Those who partake in Shuqu's gifts, however, slowly see their desires perverted and twisted, their wishes becoming living nightmares and the palace a site of endless horror. Beings who come to this realization in time may escape the Opulent Palace as shells of their former selves, yet Shuqu, fueled by their insatiable need to play host, always quickly replaces those despondent beings who depart with new wide-eyed guests.

THE PRISMATIC PITS

Named after the visibly vibrant sulfurous fumes that spill forth from its various dig sites, the Prismatic Pits are one of the few stable mining sites on the Plane of Fire. Bordering the Plane of Earth, this area is a site of frequent battle between the elementals of both planes, though these conflicts most often take place near the periphery of the actual mines. **Supervisor Nerenu** (LN female azer mechanic; *Starfinder Adventure Path #13: Fire Starters* 55) oversees the largest dig sites within the pits, whose harvested materials travel to the shipyards of the Emberen Recess and trade stalls of the City of Brass in equal measure. Nerenu routinely hires adventurers of all types to clear compromised mine shafts of rampant elementals and delusional mining crews. In recent years, a growing malady known as the “prism plague” has taken root among several of the workers, with the afflicted believing they see the truth of the cosmos within the shifting colors. Whether this is a previously unknown side effect of the prismatic fumes spewing from the pits, or the tampering of an alien presence such as a colour out of space (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 2 28), is something that Nerenu is willing to pay handsomely to find out.

SLAGHEAP TESTING GROUNDS

Part interplanar dumping ground and part corporate office, Slagheap is a mishmash of discarded trash and unnecessary melted metals. Far beyond the influence of the Dominion of Flame and other efreeti interests, the region is owned and operated by Burning Edge R&D, a salamander-run research and testing organization. Profiting off the discards of other organizations, Burning Edge R&D turns the trash into targets against which they test their latest technological innovations, especially firearms. The salamanders boast vast junkyards specifically purposed for the testing of starship-caliber weaponry, and maintain many lucrative deals with corporations like the Excoriation Combine.

SAKALAYO PEAK

The largest and most active volcano in the Plane of Fire's monumental Afoapi Range, this peak was once considered a prestigious tourist attraction for efreet and other planar natives. It is believed to be the original source of the Plane of Fire in an ancient eruption, and visitors would bathe in the caldera to experience this primal fire. In recent decades, however, an ambitious noble efreeti known as the Malikah has claimed the volcano as her own, evicting residents from the mountainside estates unless they swear fealty to her. This seizure is unsanctioned by the Dominion of Flame, and whispers abound that the Malikah has further plans of conquest that might even reach into the Material Plane. More about the Malikah and her schemes can be found on pages 44–45.



SHUQU THE RADIANT

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PLAYER OPTIONS

Fire is a key element of existence, and most civilizations throughout the galaxy are dependent on flames of one form or another for survival, whether they need it for warmth, to cook their food, to light their way in darkness, for some combination of all three, or for some other purpose. Creatures across the Material Plane can become obsessed with fire, preferring flame-based weaponry or having a more esoteric connection with the consuming element. While many technological options exist for characters seeking to showcase their adoration of fire (including flame and laser weapons), the following options are intended for characters seeking to master the mystical arts of flame and form a stronger bond with the Plane of Fire.

MYSTIC CONNECTION: FLAMEWALKER

From an early age, you've had an innate bond with fire. The raging inferno has always been with you, whether you've come to find peace and solace by staring into a flickering flame, brought fire to those in need of heat, or immolated your foes with unrestrained flames. By focusing your bond with fire, you can cause flames to do your bidding, and at more powerful stages of your advancement, you can even breach the veil to contact or even pass into the Plane of Fire itself, stepping through a portal wreathed in flickering flames.

Associated Deities: Angradd, the Devourer, Feronia, Sarenrae, Ymeri

Associated Skills: Acrobatics and Intimidate

Spells: 1st—*overheat*, 2nd—*emberstep**, 3rd—*burning ash cloud**, 4th—*wall of fire*, 5th—*contact other plane*, 6th—*plane shift*

* These spells appear on page 53.

FIRE MANIPULATION (SU) 1st Level

You can control minor flames within 30 feet. As a standard action, you can smother a flame afflicting a single piece of equipment held or worn by anyone within range. Alternatively, you can transfer the burning condition from one creature to another within range by succeeding at a caster level check (DC = 10 + 1-1/2 × the level or CR of the target creature). The target creature gains a +2 circumstance bonus to its Reflex saving throw to end the burning condition applied in this way.

FLICKERING CHARGE (SU) 3rd Level

When you perform a charge, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to take on a fiery aspect as you move, increasing your speed by 10 feet until the end of your turn. At 8th level, when you use this ability, you also gain concealment (20% miss chance) against all attacks made against you during the charge and until the beginning of your next turn. At 13th level, this miss chance increases to 40% and lasts until the end of your next turn.

EMBODIMENT OF FLAME (SU) 6th Level

You gain fire resistance 10. At 16th level, this increases to fire resistance 20, and you no longer take fire damage from fire-dominant planes. At 20th level, this increases to fire resistance 30.

FLAMING WEAPONRY (SU) 9th Level

As a move action, you can grant any weapon you hold the *flaming* weapon fusion regardless of its item level; this bonus fusion doesn't count toward the maximum total level of fusions the weapon can have at once. This bonus fusion lasts for as long as you wield the weapon and are conscious or until you spend another move action to suspend the effect.

FLAMEWALKER
MYSTIC

DANCING FLAME (SU) 12th Level

Whenever you succeed at a Reflex save, you can take a guarded step as a reaction. Alternatively, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to move up to half your speed as a reaction; you gain a +4 circumstance bonus to AC against attacks of opportunity provoked by this movement.

SHARED FLAMING WEAPONRY (SU) 15th Level

When you use the flaming weaponry connection power, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to grant the *flaming* weapon fusion to all allies' wielded weapons within 60 feet of you; these bonus fusions don't count toward the maximum total level of fusions each weapon can have at once. These bonus fusions last for as long as your weapon has its bonus fusion.

HUNGERING CONFLAGRATION (SP) 18th Level

Three times per day, you can cast a modified version of *chain surge* as a spell-like ability. Your caster level for this spell-like ability is equal to your caster level and the DC is equal to 16 + your Wisdom modifier. This version of the spell replaces the electricity descriptor with the fire descriptor and deals fire damage instead of electricity damage. Targets failing the ensuing Reflex save gain the burning condition for 5d6 fire damage instead of the short out effect.

SPELLS

The following spells are often used by those with a connection to the Plane of Fire, but can be learned by anyone with the ability to cast them.

BURNING ASH CLOUD 3 3

School conjuration (creation, fire)

Casting Time 1 standard action

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

Area 20-ft.-radius spread

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw see text; **Spell Resistance** no

You conjure forth a cloud of smoke and burning embers that billows out from the point you designate. The cloud obscures all sight, including darkvision beyond 5 feet. The area counts as a smoke hazard (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 404), except a creature within the cloud has total concealment (50% miss chance, and the attacker can't use sight to locate the target) against their attackers. In addition, the embers within the cloud deal 2d6 points of fire damage to creatures ending their turns within the cloud.

A moderate wind (11+ mph) disperses the cloud in 4 rounds; a strong wind (21+ mph) or stronger disperses the cloud in 1 round. This spell doesn't function underwater or in a vacuum.

EMBERSTEP 2 2

School evocation (fire)

Casting Time 1 standard action

Range personal

Duration 1 round/level (D)

For the duration of this spell, you leave behind a trail of faintly burning embers in any square that you move through. These embers have no effect except for providing dim light in those squares. The embers disappear at the start of your next turn. As a reaction to another creature moving into a square of embers, you can ignite that square, causing flames to leap up and burn that creature. The affected creature takes 5d6 points of fire damage (Reflex half), and gains the burning condition for 1d4 points of fire damage on a failed Reflex save. In addition, that square no longer contains embers.

PYRE WREATH 1

School abjuration

Casting Time 1 standard action

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

Targets one creature

Duration 1 hour/level (D)

Saving Throw Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

This spell creates a circle of three fist-sized orbs of flame around the target creature. The orbs increase the light level by one step within a 10-foot-radius of the target. Anytime the target of the spell takes fire damage from an attack or spell, they can spend a reaction to have one of the orbs absorb the blow. That orb disappears and the amount of fire damage is reduced by 5. The orbs cannot be used to absorb fire damage that comes from a continuous or natural environmental effect, such as walking in lava or damage from the burning condition. The spell ends when all three orbs are expended in this manner.

READ THE FLAMES 4

School divination

Casting Time 10 minutes

Range personal

Duration 24 hours

While casting this spell, you must focus on a semi-controlled flame (such as one produced by a lighter or a weapon with the *flaming* weapon fusion), centering your mind and analyzing the blaze's movements for subtle patterns that describe the underlying fundamentals of the universe. Once during the spell's duration, you can center yourself as a standard action (this is a purely mental action) to remember your time spent scrutinizing the flame, choosing one of the benefits below. When the chosen effect ends, so does the spell.

Mental Clarity: At some point during the next 10 minutes, you can reroll one skill check with a +4 circumstance bonus.

Physical Clarity: You gain a +4 circumstance bonus to EAC and KAC until the end of your next turn.

Spiritual Clarity: You can immediately attempt a new saving throw against any mind-affecting effect currently affecting you.

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"The onkushus have long been allied to those who serve the Dawnflower. Some have even visited the Radiant Cathedral and taken priests into the holy sun's atmosphere. And I have heard a host saved pilgrims near Aballon. Think about it! I can imagine nothing is like flying near the Burning Mother in the shelter of an onkushu, keeping you safe but able to see it all! So majestic, them and such sights. If you are lucky, they can show you the Plane of Fire or introduce you to an angel! What wondrous beings this galaxy holds! Perhaps I shall have the privilege of knowing one someday."

—Irdzan, khizar priest of Sarenrae

GENIE, MARIO

CR
9 XP
6,400

CN Large outsider (aquatic, extraplanar, water)
Init +4; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +17

DEFENSE

EAC 22; KAC 24

Fort +11; Ref +11; Will +10

Defensive Abilities water mastery

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., swim 60 ft.

Melee slam +22 (2d10+15 B; critical knockdown)

Ranged water bolt +20 (5d4+9 B & C; critical blind^{AR})

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Offensive Abilities vortex (4d6+9 B, DC 16, 1/10 minutes)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th)

1/year—wish (for non-genies only)

1/day—holographic image (4th level, DC 17)

3/day—invisibility, see invisibility

At will—arcane sight, fog cloud, life bubble,

plane shift (willing targets to Elemental

Planes, Astral Plane, or Material Plane only)

STATISTICS

Str +6; Dex +4; Con +4; Int +2; Wis +2;

Cha +3

Skills Athletics +22, Diplomacy +17,

Mysticism +17, Sense Motive +17,

Stealth +17

Languages Aquan, Auran, Common,

Ignan, Terran; telepathy 100 ft.

Other Abilities amphibious, change shape (humanoid)

Gear gold AbadarCorp travel suit

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Plane of Water)

Organization solitary, pair, company (3–6), or band (7–12)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Water Bolt (Su) As a standard action, a marid can emit a bolt of heat-sapping water in a 60-foot line. The marid can choose whether or not this line of water deals damage. Regardless, the line ends the burning condition on any creature it hits and puts out fires in its area. If a fire is magical, it goes out only if its creator is of a CR or level equal to or lower than the marid's CR.

In addition, the marid can cause the bolt to be continuous. Doing so has no additional effect on targets already within the line, but anything that moves across the line is attacked using the original attack roll and damage. A target the line hits but doesn't damage

blocks the line as normal. If an existing blockage is removed, the line extends out to its maximum range unless blocked anew, and it can damage creatures and objects it failed to reach previously. The marid can't damage a target more than once per round with this continuous line. If the marid moves from where the line was initiated, the line ends immediately.

Water Mastery (Ex) Waterborne creatures take a –1 penalty to attack and damage rolls against a marid.

While they are powerful elemental outsiders, marids are also among the most freewheeling, fun-loving, and capricious of genies. Others among their extraplanar kin—especially efreet and shaitans—see marids as annoyingly mercurial or embarrassingly frivolous, while marids find their dour counterparts too serious or rigid.

Most marids are passionate about their pursuit of creativity and knowledge, including artistic endeavors, such as dance or storytelling, and scholarly pursuits, such as science or engineering. Curious and outgoing, they also enjoy the company of other peoples. Many travel in search of new experiences, wider audiences, and fellow philosophers; the Material Plane is a common destination, especially watery worlds or moons, such as Kalo-Mahoi.

Marids claim to rule the Plane of Water, but the truth is that they are divided into numerous nations there. Although these states rarely engage in open conflict, they work together equally as rarely. Most ruling marids, usually monarchs, are as individualistic and capricious as the genies they rule. Marid society has complex rules of hospitality, developed over eons, to rein in their worst impulses. They also have a tradition of rewarding those they find worthy. Marids are most likely to grant a wish to another romantic or visionary, but even these whimsical genies use their reality-altering power with great care.

A typical marid stands 16 feet tall and weighs 2,500 pounds.

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NEOTOPHET

CR
10

XP
9,600



N Large construct (magical, technological)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision, low-light vision; **Perception** +19

DEFENSE **HP** 165
EAC 23; **KAC** 25

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

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

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +23 (2d10+18 B plus swallow whole) or
slam +23 (2d10+18 B; critical knockdown)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Offensive Abilities swallow whole (special, EAC 23, KAC 25,
65 HP), trample (2d10+18 B, DC 17)

STATISTICS

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

Skills Acrobatics +19, Athletics +24, Intimidate +19

Languages Common

Other Abilities conductive, unliving

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, capture team (1 plus 4 patrol-class
security robots), or prison (2–12)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Conductive (Ex) If a neotophet is dealt fire or electricity
damage, half the damage dealt passes through the
neotophet and into any creatures inside it.

Swallow Whole (Ex) When a creature is placed inside a
neotophet's hollow spherical interior, the construct's maw
locks down, preventing the neotophet from using its bite
attack but keeping the trapped creature from climbing
out. If the neotophet moves 10 feet or more on its turn,
a creature inside it must succeed at a DC 17 Reflex save
or become staggered until the start of the neotophet's
next turn. A neotophet's reinforced interior prison is
stronger than normal for a creature of its CR—however, a
swallowed creature can attempt to force open the locked
access hatch built into the neotophet's lower body. Doing
so requires the creature trying to open the hatch to
succeed at a DC 30 Engineering check. Once a creature
escapes through the hatch, the hatch closes and locks
again. This hatch can be opened from the outside only if
the neotophet is unable to act or willing to open the hatch.

A neotophet is a specialized robotic construct designed to
imprison. The robot has a hybrid nanotech orifice that can
grow large enough to swallow any creature smaller than
the construct, and a spherical containment pod doubles as
the robot's lower body and its means of locomotion. As the
neotophet glides along, this rolling sphere keeps the victim
enclosed and disoriented.

The neotophet design is an innovation based on
ancient constructs known as tophets, furnace guards,
or iron gluttons. Neotophets retain their predecessors'
magical aspects, such as immunity to fire, but they
also have state-of-the-art tech, such as gyroscopically
stable rolling frames and virtual intelligence, making
them even more effective at capturing and
retaining prisoners.

Neotophets are unswervingly loyal to their
designated masters, and tyrants across the planes enjoy
using them to retrieve stubborn vassals or punish dissidents
and rivals. Devils and efreet favor the use of neotophets,
especially against creatures that lack immunity to fire, enjoying
the suffering of such unfortunates inside the containment
sphere. For capture missions, companions such as security
robots or guards run interference for the neotophet while it
focuses on its target.

A neotophet stands 10 feet tall and weighs 3,000 pounds.



ONKUSHU

CR
13XP
25,600ASSAULT
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CG Large outsider (extraplanar, fire, good)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +23**Aura** protective aura (20 ft.)**DEFENSES**

HP 210

EAC 27; **KAC** 27**Fort** +14; **Ref** +12; **Will** +16**Defensive Abilities** amorphous, void adaptation; **DR** 10/evil;**Immunities** fire, radiation; **Resistances** electricity 10; **SR** 24**Weaknesses** vulnerable to cold**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (Su, perfect)**Melee** slam +25 (6d4+20 B & F; critical burn 3d4)**Offensive Abilities** fire vortex**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 13th)1/day—*wall of fire* (DC 21)3/day—*explosive blast* (DC 20), *irradiate* (DC 20)At will—*detect affliction*, *discern lies* (DC 21), *invisibility*(self only), *life bubble*, *remove affliction***STATISTICS****Str** +7; **Dex** +4; **Con** +5; **Int** +4; **Wis** +3;**Cha** +5**Skills** Acrobatics +23 (+31 to fly),

Bluff +23, Intimidation +28,

Mysticism +28, Sense Motive +28

Feats Mobility, Spring Attack**Languages** Celestial, Common,

Draconic, Ignan

Other Abilities spaceflight (Mysticism)**ECOLOGY****Environment** any (Plane of Fire)**Organization** solitary, pair, or host (3-12)**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Protective Aura (Su)** Any creature within 20

feet of an onkushu, including the onkushu, gains a +2 divine bonus to its AC against attacks made by evil creatures and a +4 divine bonus to saving throws against effects created by evil creatures. While within this aura and affected by the onkushu's *life bubble* spell, creatures are considered to have void adaptation and solar adaptation. If such creatures are willing or unconscious, the onkushu can carry them along with it while moving in any movement mode.

Fire Vortex (Ex) Three times per day as a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity, an onkushu can buffet its wings to create a fiery vortex 10 feet tall and 10 feet wide that travels in a straight line for 30 feet. Any creature in that area is knocked

prone, taking 10d6 fire and slashing damage (Reflex DC 21 for half damage and to avoid being knocked prone).

If the vortex travels along the ground, the area it passes through is difficult terrain for 15 rounds.

Natives of the Plane of Fire, onkushus have long been the allies, mentors, and students of angels, learning virtuous practices while teaching the goodly hosts of the Outer Sphere the value of cleansing fire. Onkushus often take an interest in mortal affairs, using portals from the Plane of Fire that form within stars to come to the Material Plane. These outsiders are kindly by nature, but when angered or roused against evil, they can be implacable foes.

An onkushu is 15 feet tall and weighs 1,000 pounds while alive, yet it burns to a fine white ash when destroyed, leaving behind only a few pounds of material.



PLANAR SCION, UNDINE

CR
1

XP
400



Undine mystic

N Medium outsider (native)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +5

DEFENSE

HP 16 **RP** 4

EAC 10; **KAC** 11

Fort +1; **Ref** +1; **Will** +4

Resistances cold 5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee survival knife +2 (1d4+1 S)

Ranged tactical semi-auto pistol +4 (1d6+1 P)



RACIAL TRAITS

Ability Adjustments: +2 Dex, +2 Wis, -2 Str.

Hit Points: 2

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

Cold Resistance: Undines have cold resistance 5.

Darkvision: Undines have darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Spell-Like Ability: An undine can cast *energy ray* as a spell-like ability at will but can deal only cold damage with the ray. Their caster level is equal to their level.

Undine Movement: Undines have both a land speed and a swim speed of 30 feet.

Water Affinity: Whenever an undine deals cold damage while either the undine or her target is swimming, or in precipitation or storms heavy enough to reduce visibility ranges (see page 398 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*), they deal an amount of additional damage equal to twice their level.

Offensive Abilities water affinity

Undine Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st; +4 ranged)

At will—*energy ray* (cold only)

Mystic Spells Known (CL 1st)

1st (3/day)—*life bubble*, *mystic cure*

0 (at will)—*stabilize*, *token spell*

Connection healer

STATISTICS

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

Skills Athletics +5 (+13 to swim), Medicine +10, Mysticism +10

Languages Aquan, Common

Other Abilities healing channel (2d8 HP)

Gear second skin, survival knife, tactical semi-auto pistol with 18 small arm rounds

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Water Affinity (Ex) See sidebar.

Undines are the descendants of humanoids and beings who hail from the Plane of Water (such as marids; see page 55). Through they don't require water to live, undines tend to settle near water and make ideal underwater explorers.

UNDINE TEMPLATE GRAFT

An undine's ancestors have a connection to the Plane of Water.

Required Creature Type and Subtype: Outsider (native).

Traits: Darkvision 60 ft.; cold resistance 5; water affinity (see Racial Traits), spell-like abilities (*energy ray* [cold only] at will).

Suggested Ability Score Modifiers: Dexterity, Wisdom.

RHEONNAGHAN

CR
15XP
51,200

NG Gargantuan outsider (native)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +26**DEFENSE****HP** 268**EAC** 29; **KAC** 31**Fort** +17; **Ref** +17; **Will** +15**Defensive Abilities** void adaptation**OFFENSE****Speed** fly 60 ft. (Su, perfect)**Melee** slam +29 (8d6+20 B)**Ranged** coronal flare +25
(5d8+15 F; critical burn 2d8)**Space** 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.**Offensive Abilities** penumbral
reflection**STATISTICS****Str** +5; **Dex** +4; **Con** +7;**Int** +3; **Wis** +3; **Cha** +9**Skills** Acrobatics +26 (+34
to fly), Intimidate +26,
Physical Science +31**Languages** Aquan, Auran,
Common, Ignan, Terran**Other Abilities** stellar
alignment**ECOLOGY****Environment** vacuum**Organization** solitary**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

Coronal Flare (Su) A rheonnaghan can unleash a blast of fire infused with positive energy as an attack with a range increment of 60 feet. This attack has the bright weapon special property, counts as magic, and ignores any energy resistance of undead creatures. When a rheonnaghan is fully photon-attuned, they can fire up to three of these flares as a full action, taking a -5 penalty to each attack roll; this counts as a zenith revelation power.

Penumbral Reflection (Su) Rheonnaghans can sometimes reflect ranged attacks made against them back at their enemies. When a rheonnaghan is fighting defensively, they can, as a reaction, reflect one ranged attack that misses them, selecting a new target within 30 feet and making a ranged attack roll at a total bonus of +21. If this attack hits, the new target is damaged as if it had been the intended target of the original ranged attack.

When a rheonnaghan is fully graviton-attuned and successfully redirects a ranged attack as a reaction, they can reflect additional ranged attacks until the beginning of their next turn. The rheonnaghan takes a cumulative -2 penalty to each redirecting attack roll after the first.

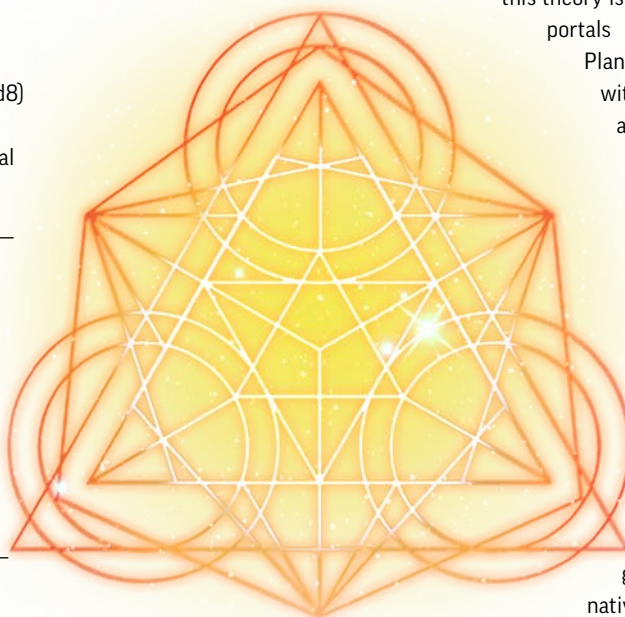
If any reflected attack misses, the rheonnaghan can't make further redirect attempts this turn. Using penumbral reflection in this manner counts as a zenith revelation power.

Many scholars believe that the heart of every star contains a link to the Positive Energy Plane. Though this theory is difficult to verify, temporary portals to the Positive Energy Plane have been recorded deep within the Pact Worlds' sun, as well as the suns of other advanced civilizations. Rarely, a crystalline mass that precipitated from the surrounding plasma coalesces around such a rift, similar to the way an oyster forms a pearl. The abundant energy radiating from the Positive Energy Plane sometimes infuses this matter with life and ejects it from the star, giving birth to an enigmatic native outsider known as a rheonnaghan.

Appearing as pulsing geometric shapes of pure energy, rheonnaghans have an almost unshakable fascination with the suns of the galaxy. Though they aren't immune to the heat and radiation produced by stars, they tend to hover in close proximity to them in order to study their cosmic phenomena, and are sometimes mistaken for mystical pieces of solar ejecta. Most rheonnaghans naturally develop solarian-like powers, and some retain the crystalline cocoons from which they were born, using them to conduct experiments into their own nature.

Though rheonnaghans are rare, the planar scientists who study them agree that no two are alike—each exhibits their own unique geometric form. No one has yet discerned the meaning of the differences in rheonnaghan's shapes, though many theories have been posited, ranging from age to a representation of the galactic coordinates of the sun from which the outsider was born. When asked about it, rheonnaghans don't seem to understand the question and become offended at their existence being reduced to simple mathematics.

A typical rheonnaghan stretches approximately 20 feet across but weighs next to nothing.

ASSAULT
ON THE
CRUCIBLEPART 1:
THE
COUNTDOWN
BEGINSPART 2:
INTO THE
CRUCIBLECONTINUING
THE CAMPAIGNTHE PLANE
OF FIREALIEN
ARCHIVESCODEX OF
WORLOS

SENTINEL TREE

CR
7

XP
3,200



N Large plant

Init +5; **Senses** blindsense (vibration) 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +19

DEFENSE

HP 107

EAC 19; **KAC** 21

Fort +11; **Ref** +9; **Will** +6

Immunities plant immunities

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft.

Melee slam +17 (2d6+12 B)

Ranged thorn barrage +14 (2d8+7 P)

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

STATISTICS

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

Skills Intimidate +14, Sense Motive +14, Stealth +14 (+20 in forests and gardens)

Languages Common (cannot speak)

Other Abilities freeze, tracking (heat)

ECOLOGY

Environment any urban

Organization solitary, pair, or copse (3-6)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Freeze (Ex) A sentinel tree can remain so still that it appears to be a normal tree. A sentinel tree that uses freeze can take 20 on its Stealth check to hide in plain sight as a normal tree.

Thorn Barrage (Ex) As an attack, a sentinel tree can fire a burst of sharp, hardened thorns with a range increment of 20 feet. This natural attack has the burst and unwieldy weapon special properties.

At first glance, a sentinel tree appears to be an elegantly manicured shrub or tall tree that wouldn't be out of place on a lawn or in a garden. In fact, these intelligent guardians have been cultivated through centuries of genetic engineering and magic, and they are favored by the wealthy elite for their ability to keep out interlopers while avoiding the unsightly appearance of armed guards. Sentinel trees are capable of learning the difference between friend and foe, acknowledging temporary exceptions to their standard orders, and using their own judgment in handling corner cases.

Sentinel trees are usually employed for a pair of simple tasks: eliminating hostile intruders and maintaining the beauty of their surroundings. While capable of independent locomotion, sentinel trees rarely leave their original emplacements and typically do so only to track intruders or dispose of any unsightly bodies that result from their guard duties.

The aesthetic concerns of a sentinel tree are perhaps their greatest weakness. While unlikely to be fooled by disguises or tricks and trained to be alert for signs of stealthy foes, a sentinel tree often avoids making attacks that risk damaging their surrounding environments overmuch.

While a sentinel tree is unable to alter their own appearance, those who grow and sell them usually cultivate a wide variety of styles, replicating the general appearance of nearly any similar-sized plant, from perfectly squared hedges to succulent, evergreen, or broad-leafed trees. On worlds where greenery would stand out as unusual, sentinel trees are sometimes engineered to resemble thorny brambles, or even abstract crystalline spires.



TUMBLETOOTH SWARM

CR
5XP
1,600ASSAULT
ON THE
CRUCIBLEPART 1:
THE
COUNTDOWN
BEGINSPART 2:
INTO THE
CRUCIBLECONTINUING
THE CAMPAIGNTHE PLANE
OF FIREALIEN
ARCHIVESCODEX OF
WORLDS

CN Tiny fey (swarm)

Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision.; **Perception** +11**DEFENSE**

HP 60

EAC 17; **KAC** 19**Fort** +9; **Ref** +9; **Will** +4**Defensive Abilities** swarm defenses; **Immunities** swarm immunities**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft., climb 15 ft.**Melee** swarm attack (1d4+8 P plus distraction [DC 13])**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 5th)1/day—*knock*3/day—*hold portal*At will—*ghost sound* (DC 11)**Offensive Abilities** drag down (+17, +3 damage)**STATISTICS****Str** +3; **Dex** +5; **Con** +2; **Int** +0; **Wis** +1; **Cha** -1**Skills** Acrobatics +11, Athletics +11 (+19 to climb), Stealth +16**Languages** Common, Sylvan (cannot speak)**ECOLOGY****Environment** any**Organization** solitary or gorge (2–5)**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

Drag Down (Ex) As a standard action when a tumbletooth swarm occupies an opponent's space, it can attempt a trip combat maneuver with a total +17 bonus. A tumbletooth swarm deals an amount of extra damage to a prone creature equal to its Strength modifier (+3 for most tumbletooth swarms).

Tumbletooths are small, verminous fey that are minor nuisances when encountered alone but much more dangerous in groups, as they gain a kind of collective intelligence that gifts them psychic abilities. A single tumbletooth resembles a hairless rat with reddish-brown skin, beady red eyes, and a single large fang. A tumbletooth moves in a series of somersaults—the source of its whimsical name. When a tumbletooth isn't feasting or sleeping, it's usually seeking a new meal, as these fey have utterly insatiable appetites and will consume anything even remotely resembling food, from unprocessed grain to rotting carrion. A single tumbletooth swarm can devour a small agrarian community's entire stockpile of stored foodstuffs in a matter of hours. Though tumbletooths tend to avoid conflict, a swarm of them will attack living creatures if they get hungry enough.

Most scholars believe the first tumbletooths slipped through a portal from the First World centuries ago and began to rapidly multiply and spread throughout the galaxy. Though they look like mammals, tumbletooths reproduce by laying leathery, self-fertilized eggs, usually after consuming a staggering amount of food. The fey move on after hiding their eggs in secluded areas. The eggs sometimes remain unhatched for years, quickening only when the young tumbletooth inside senses the presence of large amounts of food nearby. Since tumbletooths are relatively rare, these eggs usually go undiscovered or unrecognized until it's too late to stop the resulting swarm.

When tumbletooths gather en masse, their individual animal intelligences psychically link up to form a low cunning that grants the swarm the ability to understand languages, act as one unit, and even use spell-like abilities. Driven by hunger, most tumbletooth swarms use their magic to get into locked storage bins, keep doors closed to feast in peace, and spook other animals and more superstitious creatures with strange sounds. Communities familiar with the tumbletooth menace attempt to eradicate the creatures as soon as possible to avoid the formation of swarms, using scanning technology or trained animals to hunt down both adults and egg caches.



CODEX OF WORLDS

MAURNAK

Hollow World with a Miniature Sun Inside

Diameter: $\times 2$; **Mass:** $\times 1/20$

Gravity: $\times 1$

Location: The Vast

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 23 hours; **Year:** —

Drifting through the inky blackness far from any actual star, Maurnak is a hollow world—a shell of earth and rock in the shape of a planet. Though the civilized humanoids who live there recently discovered the true nature of their home world, they still don't know that their very existence is due to the experimentations of a strange native outsider called a rheonnaghan (see page 59).

Thousands of years ago, a powerful rheonnaghan, interested in fashioning an environment from which others of its kind could be born, fed magical and solar energy into its crystalline cocoon to create a miniature artificial star. Though only a fraction of the size of the smallest true star, it still radiated light and heat, and it formed a well of gravity. The rheonnaghan curated the space debris that began to accumulate around the star, eventually shaping it into a solid shell of rock and dirt several thousand miles in diameter, its inner surface supporting a thin atmosphere.

Some of the rubble contained dormant cellular life capable of photosynthesis, and when the first tiny plants began sprouting on the interior of the shell, the rheonnaghan realized they had essentially created a world and would need to nurture it. They adjusted the star so that its light would dim every 13 hours, fashioning a day-night cycle. Eventually, the oxygen content of the atmosphere rose, lakes and streams formed on the interior, and after millennia, humanoid life evolved.

These humanoids lived a largely agrarian lifestyle for dozens of centuries, unaware that they lived on the interior of a hollow shell. Their nights never plunged into full darkness (though they had no other stars in their sky, just the faint glow of the rheonnaghan's artificial sun), and they had no real seasons, just a constant temperate climate. They named their world Maurnak, after the first great leader who united many of the disparate tribes across the planet. Most Maurnakian tools and weapons were crafted from wood, as metal deposits were scarce, and had only achieved rudimentary flight when Triune's Signal spread across the galaxy. Several mystics, ruminating on this strange information, received visions of skies full of stars, and the Maurnakians began a true exploration of their world.

Believing they had conquered their skies, the Maurnakians turned “downward,” constructing a large-scale mining operation near their world's capital and soon piercing the planet's shell. Unfortunately, the cold dark exterior of Maurnak is home to akatas and other hostile aberrations seeded by asteroid strikes and interstellar migration. These flooded through the breach—known today as the Pit—resulting in a bloody conflict that claimed many lives. In the end, however, the Maurnakians were able to seal off the Pit and turn the world's renamed capital of Void's Precipice into a fortified bastion ready to defend against further invasions from without.

The majority of the population has given up on exploring the exterior of the world, happy to return to simpler lives of farming and animal husbandry, but a few brave Maurnakians still seek knowledge from the other side of the Pit. So far, the rheonnaghan has been content to dwell within their makeshift star and observe these humanoids' struggles without interference, instead focusing on their own continued experiments. But what will happen to Maurnak if the outsider finally manages to create offspring remains unknown.

NEXT MONTH

FATE OF THE FIFTH

By Patrick Brennan

The Attack of the Swarm! Adventure Path begins! As the terrible, insectile Swarm surges across another system in the Vast, the heroes are the only survivors of a doomed military battalion. After retreating through several miles of war-torn terrain to a fortified command post, they receive orders to evacuate the planet and rescue any civilians along the way. Among the refugees is a shirren priest of Hylax the Forever Queen, a mysterious ancient insect-goddess whose temple seems to be of particular interest to the Swarm. By relying on their wits and each other, the heroes just might make it into orbit before the Swarm completely overruns their world!

BATTLING THE SWARM

By Patrick Brennan

An army is only as good as its intelligence and equipment. To effectively stand against the Swarm, the players will need to know what they will be up against. This article presents information on the system where the Adventure Path begins

and reasons for all manner of characters to be a part of a planetary defense force, as well as two new military themes and items to aid in the fight to come!

A PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS

By Lacy Pellazar

The ravenous insectile race known as the Swarm is a scourge to civilizations across the galaxy, but they weren't always that way. Learn about the Swarm's origins in the far-flung past, as well their unique biology. In addition, discover a wealth of weapons and items inspired by (and, in some cases, taken directly from) Swarm components.

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CRUCIBLE**

**PART 1:
THE
COUNTDOWN
BEGINS**

**PART 2:
INTO THE
CRUCIBLE**

**CONTINUING
THE CAMPAIGN**

**THE PLANE
OF FIRE**

**ALIEN
ARCHIVES**

**CODEX OF
WORLDS**

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EXCORIATION COMBINE ALCAZAR



MAP KEY

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Starboard cargo hold | b. Science officer's station |
| 2. Galley | c. Captain's chair |
| 3. Crew quarters | d. Gunnery station |
| 4. Life boat launchers | |
| 5. Armory | 10. Engineering |
| 6. Tech workshop | 11. Rec space |
| 7. Second-in-command's quarters | 12. Captain's quarters |
| 8. Training room | 13. Medical bay |
| 9. Bridge | 14. Washroom |
| a. Pilot's station | 15. Port cargo hold |

FORWARD

1 SQUARE = 20 FEET



AT THE BOILING POINT

While the heroes recover in the liberated sun-city of Kahlannal, efreet launch an assault on the Burning Archipelago from deeper within the sun. The PCs have the advantages of position, knowledge, and surprise, giving them a unique opportunity. Using technology from their new allies, the anassanois, the PCs can approach stealthily to infiltrate the efreeti base known as the Crucible. Thwarting the invasion requires returning the Far Portal to the surface of the sun. However, the forces overseeing the base won't stand idle. In the end, General Khaim, the efreeti commander, risks everything to realize his plan to dominate the Burning Archipelago and destroy the meddlesome intruders!

This volume of Starfinder Adventure Path concludes the Dawn of Flame Adventure Path and includes:

- "Assault on the Crucible," a Starfinder adventure for 11th-level characters, by Jason Tondro.
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